SIGILLVM · VNIVERSITATIS · CALIFORNIENSIS
FIAT LVX
MDCCCLXVIII
EX LIBRIS

57.1

Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2008 with funding from
Microsoft Corporation

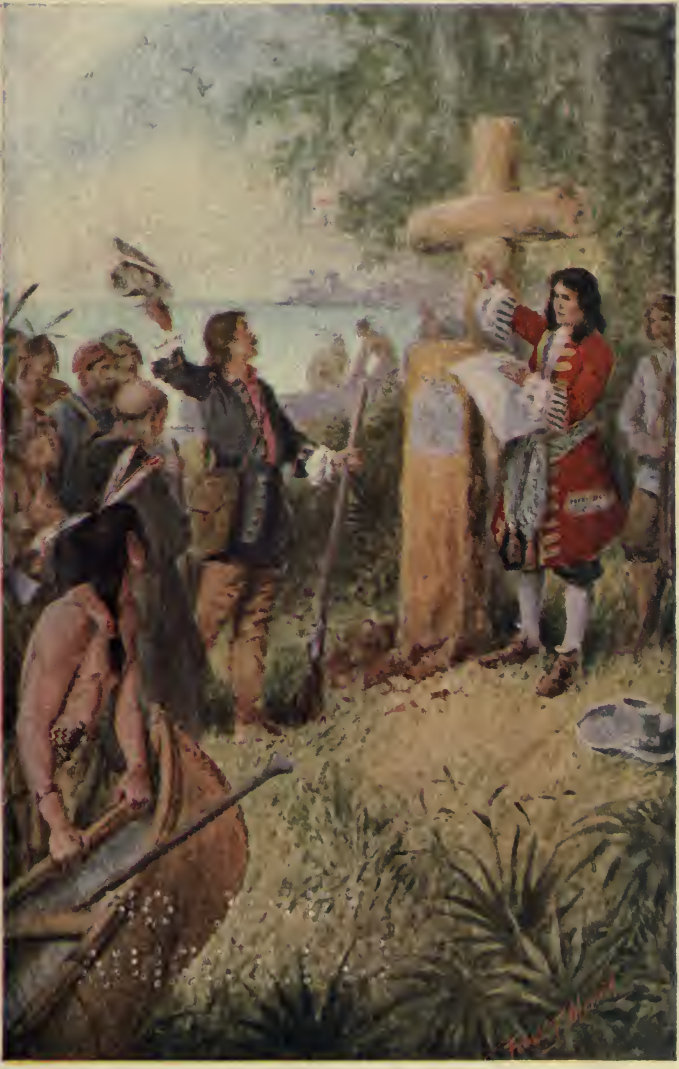
http://www.archive.org/details/manwithironhand00paririch

THE MAN WITH THE IRON HAND

BY

JOHN CARL PARISH

UNIV. OF
CALIFORNIA



LA SALLE TOOK POSSESSION IN THE NAME OF THE KING OF FRANCE (p. 187)

True Tales of the Great Valley

EDITED BY BENJAMIN F. SHAMBAUGH

The Man with the Iron Hand

BY

JOHN CARL PARISH

BOSTON AND NEW YORK
HOUGHTON MIFFLIN COMPANY
The Riverside Press Cambridge

F352
.P23

COPYRIGHT, 1913, BY HOUGHTON MIFFLIN COMPANY

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

Published October 1913

FIFTH IMPRESSION, MAY, 1922

Let us picture in imagination the history of the Great Valley of the Mississippi as a splendid drama enacted upon a giant stage which reaches from the Alleghanies to the Rockies and from the Great Lakes to the Gulf of Mexico and through which the Father of Waters sweeps majestically. Let us people this stage with real men and women — picturesque red men and no less interesting white men, Indians, Spaniards, Frenchmen, Englishmen, explorers, warriors, priests, voyageurs, coureurs de bois, fur traders, and settlers. Let the scenes be set about the lakes, along the rivers, among the hills, on the plains, and in the forests. Then, viewing this pageant of the past, let us write the true tales of the Great Valley as we write romance — with life, action, and color —that the history of our Great Valley may live.

BENJAMIN F. SHAMBAUGH

553401

AUTHOR'S PREFACE

The purpose of this book is to present in readable narrative form, yet with strict accuracy, some of the events which attended the coming of the French explorers into the Mississippi Valley, and to deal with these events as much as possible from the standpoint of the Indians whose country the white men entered. In other words, an effort has been made to place the reader in the position and environment of the native inhabitants in order that he may witness the coming of the whites through the eyes and minds of the Indians instead of viewing from the outside the exploration, by men of his own kind, of an unknown land peopled by a strange and vaguely understood race.

For the sake of preserving the standpoint of the Great Valley, the story of explorations is centered about Henry de Tonty — the "Man with the Iron Hand" — who, unlike his leader La Salle, remained in the valley of the Mississippi and in close relations with its inhabitants for a quarter of a century.

AUTHOR'S PREFACE

This book is not in any sense fiction. It has been written directly from the original sources and from the best information available upon the life of the Indian at the time of the arrival of the whites. The sources consist mainly of the letters and relations of Father Marquette and other Jesuits, of Joliet and La Salle and Tonty, and the writings of the various friars, priests, and soldiers who accompanied them. A few fragments are accessible in manuscript form only; but the most important material has been compiled, edited, and published by Pierre Margry, John Gilmary Shea, B. F. French, Reuben Gold Thwaites, and others.

Where conversations are given they have been taken from the reports of those who held them or heard them. Usually they have been translated literally from the French records. Sometimes the direct discourse has been turned into indirect, or abridged, and in a few cases the indirect has been turned into the direct form.

The writings of the early explorers and priests abound in descriptive details of a climatic, physical, or personal nature; and this information, wherever illuminative, has been drawn upon to reproduce as vividly and as truly as possible the conditions surrounding the events described.

There is one secondary writer who will always deserve the gratitude of the student of subjects connected with the French and Indians in Canada and the Mississippi Valley, and acknowledgments are here made to Francis Parkman, not as a source of information — although his conclusions, drawn from an exhaustive study of original documents, are invaluable — but as a pioneer and unrivaled master in the field and a source of unfailing inspiration.

There are many persons who have aided the work in various ways, and their assistance has been duly appreciated; but space will permit the mention of only two of them. The helpful criticism and suggestions of my wife throughout the entire preparation of the volume have materially benefited the text; and the constant advice and encouragement of the editor of the series, Dr. Benjamin F. Shambaugh, and his careful editorial revision of the manuscript have added much to the value of the book.

JOHN CARL PARISH.

DENVER, COLORADO.

CONTENTS

I.	The Captive	1
II.	The Coming of the Strangers	5
III.	Down the Great River	19
IV.	The Captive Released	33
V.	The Black Gown	40
VI.	"The Iroquois are Coming"	48
VII.	The Secret Council	59
VIII.	The Fort Called Crèvecœur	70
IX.	The White Invasion	79
X.	The Mysterious Hand	87
XI.	"We are all Savages"	92
XII.	The Death of Chassagoac	99
XIII.	The Iroquois Come	104
XIV.	The Scattering of the Tribes	114
XV.	A Sioux War Party	127
XVI.	The Land of the Sioux	134
XVII.	A Buffalo Hunt	142
XVIII.	The Miamis Repent	150
XIX.	A Chief Come to Life	161
XX.	Strange Rites	169
XXI.	The Lower Mississippi	180

CONTENTS

XXII. THE GATHERING OF THE TRIBES . 192

XXIII. FORT ST. LOUIS 204

XXIV. THE LOST CHIEF 213

XXV. NEWS FROM LA SALLE 220

XXVI. AN ILL-STARRED VOYAGE . . . 228

XXVII. HUNTING THE MISSISSIPPI . . . 237

XXVIII. FROM THE GULF TO THE ILLINOIS . 248

XXIX. WHEN HE LEFT THEM 256

XXX. WHITE AND RED SAVAGES . . . 264

XXXI. TONTY'S HEROIC VENTURE . . 273

XXXII. THE PITIFUL REMNANT . . . 281

The frontispiece is from a painting by Frank T. Merrill

THE MAN WITH THE IRON HAND

UNIV. OF
CALIFORNIA

The
Man with the Iron Hand

I

THE CAPTIVE

A SUDDEN, far-off cry broke the stillness that had brooded over the long, low Indian lodges on the hill. Instantly the whole village awoke to intense excitement. Women dropped their work by the fireside; old men put away their long-stemmed pipes and leaped like young braves to the doors of the lodges; while in the fields young girls stood straight to listen. Again came the cry, but nearer now and as of many voices. From every lodge by the side of the river and on the hill came pouring the red-skinned villagers, their straight, black hair glistening in the sunlight. From the fields of corn and squashes and out from among the bean-vines came lithe maidens and sturdy Indian women; and from their play by the riverside naked children tumbled breathlessly into the open space before the lodges.

In the distance, with wild, triumphant cries, came the war party for which the women and old men of the village had waited so long. Now they could see the gay feathers that decorated the heads and the red paint that smeared the bodies of the returning braves. Now they caught sight of scalp-locks waved in the air; and in the midst of the throng of warriors they saw the figure of a strange Indian lad plodding along between two tall braves. "Scalps and a captive" went up the cry from the waiting villagers, and out into the open with shouts of welcome they poured to meet the home-coming band.

It was an occasion long to be remembered. The women of the tribe gathered in the open, and with weird songs and wild music, with arms flung high and feet shuffling and leaping, and with bodies twisting and bending, danced the scalp dance.

The captive was only a boy, who did not speak the language of the Illinois into whose triumphant hands he had fallen. He was a stranger in the midst of enemies. Sometimes, as he well knew, in the camps of the Peoria tribe, when darkness had fallen after a day of battle, captives were burned alive. Such a scene his terrified mind now pictured. He imagined himself bound at the foot of a stake in the midst of a clearing. He could see flames reach out hungrily and consume the dried sticks and underbrush. Each second they mounted higher, throwing a circle of light on a close-packed crowd of heartless and rejoicing Indians, who watched the growing flames leap up and lick at the limbs of the helpless captive tied to the stake.

Perhaps, if he had been an Iroquois, burning would have been the young boy's fate. But on this particular occasion the Iowa River, which ran past the Peoria village, witnessed no such barbaric torturings, for the wife of the chief claimed the captive and took him to her own lodge, where in due time and with proper ceremony he was adopted as a member of the chief's family.

It was in some such train of events that this captive Indian boy came, with strange words upon his lips and fear in his heart, to live with the Peoria tribe of Illinois Indians. He had many forebodings, but with all his Indian imagination he could not foresee that from this village of his adoption he would set out upon a series of adventures such as no boy or man of his tribe had yet experienced — that he would pass through countries and among people like none he had ever known and come upon dangers that would make his capture in battle seem as tame as a day's fishing.

II

THE COMING OF THE STRANGERS

It was many days later, and the quiet and beauty of June had come upon the Mississippi Valley. From in front of the Peoria lodges on the banks of the Iowa River, a slender trail slipped off across the prairies through two leagues of sunshine over a country fair to see, and came at length to the west bank of the Mississippi. But on this summer day no Indian traveled the pathway that led from the village. There was no one in the streets of the Indian town, and no movement to be seen save the slow rising of smoke from the tops of the three hundred lodges which dotted the hill like so many long arbors, with rounded roofs made waterproof by layers of plaited rush mats. But from the lodges came the murmur of voices, for inside the windowless walls the Indians of the Peoria tribe were gathered.

Down the center line within each lodge four or five fires were burning, and beside each fire two families made their home. Indian women squatted by the smouldering embers, or pounded corn into meal in stone bowls; while here and there on rush mats or on the dirt floor sat the men with tattooed and sinewy bodies, smoking long-stemmed pipes or mending bows. Against the walls brown papooses, on end in their cases, blinked at the light from doorway and fires or gazed stolidly and silently at nothing. Life among the lodges, except in time of war, was uneventful. Nor was there on this day in late June any reason to look for events other than those which had fallen upon the tribe for generations.

Then of a sudden the village was startled by a shout. It was not that peculiar cry of war which sometimes echoed along the valley, nor yet the cry of returning hunters or warriors. It had an odd new note in it that halted the busy work of the Indian women and woke to activity the dreaming braves. Pipes were laid aside, stones with which the squaws were grinding corn fell quiet into the bowls, and papooses were forgotten as the villagers swarmed out of the lodges into the sunlight.

Strange was the sight which met their curious gaze. There in the pathway that came over from the Mississippi were two men. The Peorias had seen no Indians like these. Although it was the month of June the strangers were covered from head to foot with garments of cloth. One, a man yet in his twenties, was dressed in a coat and heavy breeches; the other, a quiet-faced man somewhat older than his companion, wore a long black robe, gathered about his waist by a cord and reaching to his feet. Swung from this cord was a string of large beads from which hung a cross.

Unannounced these strange beings had appeared in the pathway before the village almost as if dropped by some spirit from the sky. No paint was on their pale faces, no feathers in their hair. They carried no weapons and displayed neither the pipe of war with its red paint and feathers nor the pipe of peace that told of the coming of friends. Yet there were those among the Indian villagers who doubtless knew whence the strangers came. Perhaps among them were some of the Illinois warriors who, six years before, had made a visit to a group of cabins many leagues to the north, on the shore of Lake Superior, and who had there seen the energetic fur traders, with their blanket coats and stout breeches, and the Jesuit priests who, dressed like this man in black gown and hood, had pushed their way into the villages all about the Great Lakes. Perhaps in the journeys which the Peorias sometimes made to the village of their Kaskaskia brothers over on the Illinois River, they had heard of the men with white faces who lived near Green Bay and at the Straits of Mackinac.

The word quickly passed among the men of the Peoria village that these two strangers were of the great French nation from over the sea. Moreover, since it was customary for the Indian to be hospitable to peaceable visitors, these two men who had appeared so unexpectedly in the pathway must be fitly welcomed. Four Indians — old men with authority in the tribe — stepped out from the crowd and advanced down the path. They walked slowly, two of them holding above their heads in the glowing sunlight the calumets or pipes of peace decorated with feathers and finely ornamented. Without a word they drew near the strangers, holding their pipes to the sky as if offering them to the sun to smoke. Finally they stopped and gazed attentively, yet courteously, upon the white men.

Then spoke up the man in the black gown. "Who are you?" he said in a broken Algonquian tongue.

"We are Illinois," the old men answered. There was pride in their tones, for the name Illinois means "the men" — as if no other Indians were so worthy to be called men. Then they gave the white men the pipes of peace to smoke and invited them to visit the lodges.

Together the Indians and their guests walked up the path to the village. At the door of one of the lodges was an old man who stood naked and erect, with hands extended to the sun. Toward this lodge the strangers made their way; and as they drew near, the old man spoke: —

"How beautiful is the sun, O Frenchmen, when thou comest to visit us! All our village awaits thee and thou shalt enter all our lodges in peace."

Within the lodge were many of the tribe, and in their minds was great wonder as they looked upon the curious men from the East. The elders of the tribe again gave to the visitors the pipe of peace; and when they had smoked, the Indians also drew upon the calumet, thus binding upon themselves peace and good will to their strange guests.

A little way off was a group of lodges where lived the greatest chief of the tribe. When he heard of the coming of the white men, he sent to invite them to his lodge. The strangers accepted, and a great retinue attended them as they passed through the village. Eager to see such unusual visitors, the Indians followed them in throngs. Some lay in the grass and watched them as they passed by; others ran ahead, and then walked back to meet them. Yet without noise and with great courtesy they looked upon the two white men. Finally they all came to the lodge of the Peoria chief.

The chief stood in his doorway, while on either side of him stood an old man. Naked were the three, and up toward the sun they held the long-stemmed calumet. With a few dignified words the chief drew the white men into his lodge, where again they smoked together in friendship. Then silence fell upon those within the lodge, for the time had come when the strangers should tell of their mission. Impassive but full of expectancy, the Indians waited. It was the man in the black gown who spoke;

and after the manner of the Indians he gave them four presents and with each present he gave them a message.

Silently the red men listened as with his first present he told them of the object of his coming. He was Jacques Marquette, a priest of the Order of Jesuits, and his companion was Louis Joliet, a fur trader and explorer of the great French nation. They had come journeying peaceably to visit the tribes that dwelt upon the Mississippi, and they were eager to go as far as the sea into which the Great River flowed.

Again he gave them a present and told them of the God of the white men, who had created the Indian as well, and who had sent the black-robed priests into the far corners of the earth to tell the Indians of his glory. Then a third present he gave to the Peorias and told them of the great chief of the French who sent word that he had conquered the fierce Iroquois and made peace everywhere. With the fourth and last present he begged the Peorias to tell him of the Indian nations to the south along the windings of the great river and beside the sea into which it flowed.

When the priest ceased speaking, the chief of the Peorias rose. Beside him stood an Indian boy of about ten years. He was not a Peoria, but the captive who had been taken in battle and adopted into the chief's family. Placing his hand on the boy's head, the chief spoke these words: —

"I thank thee, Black Gown, and thee, O Frenchman, for having taken so much trouble to come to visit us. Never has the earth been so beautiful or the sun so bright as to-day. Never has our river been so calm or so free from rocks, which thy canoes have removed in passing. Never has our tobacco tasted so good or our corn appeared so fine as we now see it. Here is my son whom I give thee to show thee my heart."

Thus the captive Indian lad came to be one of the party of explorers and to share their strange wanderings and adventures in the Great Valley.

As the priest spoke of the God of the French who had sent his men across seas and into forests, the Indian chief, and those who sat with him, thought of their own manitous and gods, and of their own medicine men who understood and knew the powerful spirits, and by prayers and incantations could influence them to bring sunshine to ripen the corn and rain in time of drought, to guard them in warfare, and to cure them in sickness. This black-robed priest must be a great medicine man in the lodges of the whites; and so the chief said: —

"I beg thee to have pity on me and on my nation. It is thou who knowest the Spirit who made us all. It is thou who speakest to Him and hearest his word. Beg Him to give me life and health and to come and dwell with us that we may know Him."

Then the chief gave the priest a pipe like that which the two old men had carried. It was carved, and decked with the plumage of birds, and its stem was as long as a tall brave's arm. It was a token of peace which the white men would often need in the countries they were about to explore. With this present the Peoria spoke of the love he bore for the great chief of the French.

With another present he warned the white men of the dangers ahead of them; and he begged them not to go farther. Tribes fierce and deadly lived toward the south, and other dangers more mysterious and awful lurked along the waters of the river. But the gentle-faced priest replied that he had no fear of death, saying that he counted no happiness greater than to die teaching of his God.

Amazed were all the Indians who sat in the chief's lodge and heard this answer. To scalp a foe in honor of one's manitou and to the glory of his nation seemed the height of joy and triumph; but they could not understand the courage of one who would willingly be scalped or tortured in honor of his God. So they made no reply and the council closed.

Meanwhile among the lodges Indian women and girls had busied themselves in preparing a feast for the strangers. Papooses were hung up out of the way on trees or leaned against the lodge walls while their mothers brought corn and meat, stirred the fires, and killed a dog for the distinguished guests. A woman whose nose had been cut off as a punishment for unfaithfulness to her husband came out of a near-by lodge. Young girls, whose daily duty it was to care for the rows of corn and beans in the fields, now helped to bring into the lodge the food which the women had made ready.

The first course at this Peoria feast was sagamite, a dish made from the meal of Indian corn and seasoned with fat. It was served on a great wooden platter. An Indian, acting as master of ceremonies, took a spoon made from the bone of a buffalo, filled it with sagamite, and presented it several times to the mouths of the strangers as one would feed children. Then they brought, fresh from the fires which the Indian women had tended, a dish containing three fish. The same Indian took the fish, removed the bones, blew upon some pieces to cool them, and fed them to the guests. The third course, which was served only upon rare and highly important occasions, consisted of the meat of a dog freshly killed. To the great surprise of the Indians the white men did not eat of this dish, and so it was taken away. The fourth course was buffalo meat, the choicest morsels of which were given to the priest and his companion.

After this elaborate feast, the Peorias took their visitors through the whole village, and the open-mouthed and open-hearted Indians brought them gifts of their own make — belts and bracelets made from the hair of buffalo or bear and dyed red, yellow, and gray. At length when night came upon the Peoria lodges, Marquette and Joliet were made comfortable on beds of buffalo robes in the lodge of the chief.

In the afternoon of the next day the strangers departed from the Indian lodges on the Iowa River and followed the pathway back to the bank of the Mississippi; and with them, courteous to the last, went the chief and full six hundred members of the tribe. When they came out upon the river bank, the Indians gazed in wonder at the five white men who had been left by their leaders to guard two small canoes — small, indeed, in comparison with the great boats of the Peorias which, hollowed out of three-foot logs, were half a hundred feet long.

The sun was about halfway down the sky when the strangers embarked. The Peorias, gathered on the bank, looked on curiously as the two white men and the Indian boy joined their companions in the birch-bark canoes, pushed out from the shore, swung into the current, and paddled off downstream. Then they faced the dropping sun and walked back to the village. As they thought of the savage tribes to the south and the awful dangers of the river, they doubted greatly if the gallant strangers would again come to their village and pay them the visit which the black-robed priest had promised.

They did see these same voyagers again, but not in the village by the side of the Iowa River; for during that very summer the Peoria tribe moved. One day the Indian women stripped the lodgepoles, packed up the camp implements, loaded themselves with supplies of food and robes, and together with the men of the village started on a journey eastward which led them far beyond the Mississippi. On the banks of the Illinois River, not far from the lake that still bears their name, the Peoria women set up new lodges and kindled the fires that were to burn day and night in the new home. Farther up the same river another tribe of the Illinois Nation — the Kaskaskias — were living in a village on the north bank.

Between these two Illinois towns the young braves no doubt often passed during the summer of 1673; and as they sat by the fires of their Kaskaskia brothers and smoked the long calumets, the Peorias told of the coming of the whites to the village beyond the Mississippi and of their departure with the Indian boy to journey down the length of the mysterious river to the great salt sea of the south.

III

DOWN THE GREAT RIVER

A BLACK-ROBED priest, a young fur trader, five Frenchmen, and a young Indian boy sat in two birch-bark canoes on the broad current of the Mississippi River one summer evening. Having eaten a hurried supper beside a campfire on the bank, they paddled on down the darkening river so that the fire might not betray them to Indian enemies. Night overtook them and they anchored their canoes in midstream. Leaving one man on guard, the rest of the party made themselves as comfortable as possible in the narrow boats and tried to get some sleep.

The sentinel sat silent in his canoe, but with every sense alert. Through the long hours of night he watched with keen eye for unnatural shadows in the dim light of moon or stars and listened for sound of paddle or stir of wild animals. The adventurers were in a strange country and they knew not what dangers might lurk beside them while they slept.

The Indian boy, into whose valley the strangers had come, knew the ways of the night upon river and shore, but he was now in strange company. It may be that he, too, was awake, thinking over in his childish heart the curious ways of these white men. The Peoria village where he had so lately made his home was many leagues up the river. What lands were they coming to? When would the monsters of the river, of whom his people had told him, swallow them, canoes and all, into a terrible death?

When a certain constellation crossed the zenith the sentinel reached over and waked one of his comrades, then joined the others in sleep. At length the darkness began to lift, as to the left the faint light of dawn crept up over the rocky bank of the river. Soon the Frenchmen awoke, took to their paddles, and began another day's journey.

Each stroke of the paddles carried the Indian boy farther from his home and nearer the monsters of the great river. By training a keen observer, he looked up at a steep wall of rock and caught sight of two strange and fearsome figures. Terror possessed him, for he knew he was in the presence of the dread beings of which his people had warned him. There, painted on the rocks in red, black, and green colors, were two monsters as large as buffalo calves. They had faces like men, but with horrible red eyes, and beards like those of bull buffalo; and on their heads were horns like the horns of deer. Scales covered their bodies; and their tails were so long that they wound about the body and over the head and, going back between their legs, ended in the tail of a fish.

It was as if the Indian boy were alone with an evil spirit, for no Indian was near him. He could ask the white men no questions. They, too, now saw the dread animals; and with much pointing and excitement began to talk among themselves, but in a tongue the Indian boy could not understand. Not daring to look long at the pictured rock, he turned his face away and sat in his narrow seat uncomforted and filled with that mystic awe which only people of his own race could feel. The white men talked on as the canoes swept smoothly downstream.

Suddenly as they talked a dull roar met their ears, growing louder as they descended the river until they saw a great opening in the bank at the right and a broad river pour in from the northwest to join them. It was the Missouri coming down from the mountains a thousand miles away and hurling into the Mississippi a mass of mud and débris, huge branches, and even whole trees. The two canoes dodged here and there, while the men at the paddles, alert now and forgetful of painted dragons, drove their craft now to the right, now to the left, swerved to avoid a great tree, or paddled for their lives to outrace a mass of brush. Vigorous work alone saved them.

Out of danger, the adventurers fell to wondering from what lands came the mighty stream. The stout-hearted Marquette vowed to stem its powerful current at some future day and follow its waters to their source, thinking that he might thus find another stream which would take him westward into the great Vermilion Sea that lay on the road to China. But the Indian boy did not easily forget the monsters on the rocks, and he still looked about him with apprehensive glances.

It was not many leagues farther down the stream that the voyagers came to another of the fearful dangers of which the Peorias had warned them — a place in the river where, according to Indian legend, there lived a demon who devoured travelers and sucked them down into the troubled depths. As they approached the dreaded spot, they saw a fierce surging of the waters, driven with terrific force into a small cove. Rocks rose high out of the stream; and against these the river dashed mightily, tossing foam and spray into the air. Balked in their course, the waters paused, then hurled themselves down into a narrow channel.

To the Indian mind, which saw life and humanity, good spirits and bad, in all of nature, there was an evil spirit in these turbulent waters. It was with the eyes of his own race that the Indian boy now watched the high-tossed spray. But the two canoes passed by in safety and soon came to smoother waters.

Presently the voyagers drew near the broad mouth of the Ohio, in whose valley, raided from time to time by fierce tribes of the Iroquois, were the villages of the Shawnee Indians. Along the shores were canes and reeds that grew thick and high. Mosquitoes began to gather in swarms that made life miserable for the men as they toiled in the heat of the day. But following the way of the Indians of the

Southern country, they raised above their canoes tents of canvas which sheltered them in part from both the mosquitoes and the burning sun.

So sailing, they came one day unexpectedly upon a group of armed Indians. Up rose Marquette and held high the pipe of peace, while Joliet and his comrades reached for their guns to be ready should an attack be made. This time, however, they were safe; for the Indians were only inviting them to come ashore and eat. The voyagers landed and were led to the village, where the Indians fed them upon buffalo meat and white plums.

It was evident that these Indians were acquainted with white men, and that they bought goods of traders from the East; for they had knives and guns and beads and cloth and hatchets and hoes, and even glass flasks for their powder. Venturesome Englishmen from the Atlantic Coast had perhaps sold them these things in exchange for furs. With the Spanish firmly settled in the Southwest, and the English — long-time enemies of France — pushing in from the East, it was high time that the French came down the river, if the Great Valley of the Mississippi were ever to be brought under the flag of France.

The Indians now told Marquette and Joliet that the great sea to the south was only ten days' journey away; and so with renewed energy the band of eight set out once more in their canoes. Huge cottonwoods and elms now lined either shore, and bright-plumaged birds darted from limb to limb; while in the hidden prairies beyond could be heard the bellowing of wild buffalo.

As they drew near a village of Michigamea Indians, whose lodges were almost at the water's edge, the voyagers heard the savage yells of warriors inciting one another to an attack. Soon they swarmed along the shore with bows and arrows, and with hatchets and great war clubs. In vain did Marquette hold up the calumet of peace. Downstream the Indians climbed into their long dugouts and pushed up to attack the strangers from below; while upstream other young warriors launched their wooden canoes and swept down the river with hoarse cries of battle. Hemmed in by the two war parties in boats, and with armed enemies howling along the river bank, death seemed very near to the Frenchmen. The warning words of the Peoria chief had told them of just such an end.

Perhaps the twinkling lights of the Canadian river towns and the smiling face of France had never seemed so far away as now in these untraveled stretches of the Great Valley. And the Indian lad — before him lay either death or captivity. In just such scenes as this he had passed from tribe to tribe. It may be that his young mind now carried him back to the village where the smoke rose from the lodges of his own people, where his own mother had unloosed the thongs that bound him to the cradle of his papoose days, and taught him to run over the green prairies and in the cool woods with the other lads, learning to draw a bow and trap wild creatures of the forest and roll about in the sun, naked and healthy and happy.

But this was not a time to think of other days. A handful of young braves threw themselves into the river to seize the small canoes of the white men; but finding the current too strong, they put back to the shore. One raised his club and hurled it at the black-robed priest. Whirling through the air it passed over the canoes and fell with a splash into the river. Nearer and nearer closed the net of enemies about them, until from every side bows began to bend and arrows drew back, tipped with death.

Suddenly their weapons dropped. Older men among them, perhaps recognizing for the first time the pipe of peace which Marquette still held, restrained the impetuous young braves. Coming to the water's edge as the white men drew nearer, two chiefs tossed their bows and quivers into the canoes and invited the strangers to come ashore in peace.

With signs and gestures Indians and white men talked. In vain did Marquette try, one after another, the six Indian languages which he knew. At length there came forward an old man who spoke a broken Illinois tongue. Through him Marquette asked many questions about the lower river and the sea. But the Indians only replied that the strangers could learn all they wished at a village of the Arkansas Indians, about ten leagues farther down the stream. The explorers were fed with sagamite and fish; and, not without some fear, they spent the night in the Indian village.

The next morning they continued their journey, taking the old man with them as an interpreter; and ahead of them went a canoe with ten Indians. They had not gone many leagues when they saw two canoes coming up the river to meet them. In one stood an Indian chief who held a calumet and made signs of peace. Chanting a strange Indian song, he gave the white men tobacco to smoke and sagamite and bread made from Indian corn to eat. Under the direction of their new guides the Frenchmen soon came to the village of the Arkansas, which lay near the mouth of the river of that name.

Here under the scaffold of the chief they were given seats on fine rush mats. In a circle about them were gathered the elders of the tribe; and around about the elders were the warriors; and beyond the warriors in a great crowd were the rest of the tribe eager to see and hear the strange men who had come down from the north. Among the young men was one who spoke the Illinois tongue better than the old man, and through him Marquette talked to the tribe. In his talk he told of the white man's religion, and of the great French chief who had sent them down the valley of the Mississippi.

Then he asked them all manner of questions about the trip to the sea. Was it many days' journey now? And what tribes were on the way?

It was only on occasions like this that the Indian boy understood what was said, for usually his companions in the canoes spoke the melodious but to him wholly unintelligible French. He now listened to the Illinois tongue with keen interest. The young interpreter was telling of their neighbors to the north and east and south and west. Four days' journey to the west was the village of an Illinois tribe, and to the east were other friendly people from whom they bought hatchets, knives, and beads. But toward the great sea to the south, where the white men wished to go, were their enemies. Savage tribes with guns barred them from trade with the Spaniards. All along the lower river the fierce tribes were continually fighting; and woe betide the white men if they ventured farther, for they would never return.

As the Indians told of the dangers of the river below the mouth of the Arkansas River, large platters of wood were continually being brought in, heaped with sagamite, Indian corn, and the flesh of dogs. Nor did the feast end before the close of day.

Meditating upon the warnings of their hosts, the white men made ready for the night. When they had retired on beds raised about two feet from the ground at the end of their long bark-covered lodge, the Indians held a secret council. Some of the warriors had looked with envious eyes upon the canoes, clothes, and presents of the whites. Why not fall upon the strangers by night, beat out their brains with skull-crackers or Indian war clubs, and make away with the plunder? To some of the covetous Indians it was a tempting plan. The whites were defenseless and hundreds of leagues from their friends. Who was there to avenge their death?

But to the chief, who had welcomed the visitors with the pipe of peace, the bond of friendship was sacred. He broke up the schemes of the treacherous braves, dismissed the council, and sent for the white men. Then with the pipe of peace in his hand he danced before the strangers the sacred calumet dance; and as he closed the ceremony he gave into the hands of Marquette the calumet. It was a token, sacred among all Indians, that peace should not be broken, and that the whites would be unharmed.

The Frenchmen, however, did not sleep much. Joliet and the priest sat up far into the night and counseled together as to whether they should go on to the sea or turn back. They were now very near to the sea, they thought — so near that they were confident that the river continued southward to the Gulf of Mexico, instead of turning to the west or east to the Vermilion Sea or the Atlantic Ocean. Indeed, they believed that in two or three days they might reach the Gulf.

But in the country between the mouth of the Arkansas and the mouth of the Mississippi skulked fierce and murderous tribes; while not far away were the Spaniards. Should they fall into the hands of enemies and lose their lives, who would tell to France the story of their marvelous journeyings? Their beloved nation would lose all knowledge of their expedition and therefore all claim to the Great Valley by right of their exploration. Then, too, there seemed little more to be learned in traveling the balance of the way to the mouth. Joliet was anxious to report to his government the story of the expedition, and Marquette was full of eagerness to tell his brother-priests of the Indians whom he had met and the great work that lay open to their missionary efforts.

As a matter of fact, the voyagers were many a long day's journey from the river's mouth. But happy in the thought that they were nearly there, Joliet and the priest at last determined to turn back upstream and carry to New France the wonderful tale of their pioneer voyage down the great untraveled river.

IV

THE CAPTIVE RELEASED

It was about the middle of July, 1673, when the Arkansas Indians saw the band of white men leave their village to start out upon the return voyage. The weeks that followed their departure from the Arkansas town were full of toil for the voyagers; for now in the heat of summer they must paddle against the current of the greatest of American rivers. At length, coming to the mouth of the Illinois and believing that it offered a shorter route than the one by which they had come, they turned into its waters and paddled up its smooth stream toward the Lake.

In the course of this journey up the Illinois River they came one day, with great surprise, to a village in whose lodges lived the same Peoria Indians whom they had last seen on the other side of the Mississippi, in the town on the bank of the Iowa River. The Peorias, too, were surprised to see the seven white men and the Indian boy come paddling up the stream.

Here the tired voyagers were welcomed with such hospitality that they lingered for three days in the village. The Indian boy renewed old acquaintances, while Marquette passed from lodge to lodge, telling the Indians of the God of the French who had guarded them in their long journey and protected them from pestilence and the disasters of the river, and from torture and murder by hostile tribes of Indians. The Peorias in turn told the priest of their brother tribes along the Illinois River and of the wars they waged together against the Sacs and Foxes of the North and the bands of Iroquois from the East. But as they looked into the face of the priest, they saw lines of suffering and sickness, and they knew that he had not borne with ease the long and arduous trip.

When the voyagers made ready to depart, the Indians gathered at the river bank to bid them good-bye. As they were about to embark, some Indians brought to the edge of the stream a sick child and asked Father Marquette to baptize it. With great joy the priest complied, for it was the first and, indeed, the only baptism on the whole summer's voyage. A few minutes later the little child died.

The canoes were then pushed into the stream, the men dipped their paddles, and, rounding a point of land a short distance up the stream, disappeared from view. The group of Indians turned back to the village, bearing the body of the dead child. They wrapped it tenderly in the skins of wild animals and laid it away on a scaffold of poles high above the reach of prowling wolves.

Autumn came upon the land and through the fallen leaves along the shore the young Indians passed back and forth among the villages on the Illinois. From the Kaskaskias, who dwelt farther up the river, the Peorias learned that Marquette and Joliet had stopped at the upper village, and that the black robe had promised to come again and preach to them. Moreover, when they left this village, one of the chiefs of the nation, with a band of his own men, went with them up the river, across the portage, and as far as the Lake of the Illinois — as they then called Lake Michigan. There they left the white men paddling valiantly up the west shore toward Green Bay and the Jesuit Mission of St. Francis Xavier.

At Green Bay, Marquette stopped with his brother priests and tried to gain strength enough to return to the Illinois villages. But Joliet went farther. Taking the Indian lad with him, he journeyed as far as the settlement at the Straits of Mackinac. There the young Indian spent such a winter as he had never known before. About him were the great log lodges of the French; and in the streets of the little town walked men of strange and curious ways. There were dark-bearded traders, priests with black robes and cowls, trappers and *coureurs de bois* in blanket coats, and fur caps; and Indians, from about the Great Lakes, gathered there to sell furs and buy the white man's guns and liquor.

The Indian boy soon began to understand and talk the language of the white men, and by the end of the winter he could even read and write a little in French. He was quick to learn the ways of the Frenchmen; and his many attractive qualities endeared him to Joliet.

When the spring of 1674 came on, Joliet and several Frenchmen embarked in a canoe and began the descent of the Great Lakes. They were bound for the home of the governor of New France at Quebec, high on the rocks beside the St. Lawrence. As a gift to the governor, Joliet was taking the Indian boy who had shared his wanderings in the Great Valley.

Joliet and his companions were weeks upon the journey, paddling steadily by lake shore and river, through straits and past wooded islands. Only once were they compelled to carry their canoe over a portage. At last they came near to the town of Montreal, with the high hill rising up behind it. They were nearly home now, and the heart of Joliet must have leaped high as he thought of the long months he had spent on his perilous journey. Soon he would come in triumph before Frontenac, governor of Canada, and tell him of his explorations and put into his hands his map and papers and the precious journal of his voyage. These documents lay beside him in the bottom of the canoe in a box, together with some relics of the far-away valley of the Mississippi.

Only La Chine Rapids — the Sault St. Louis as they were then called — lay between the voyagers and Montreal, and then the road was clear and smooth to the high rock of Quebec. The canoe entered the swift-running water. Foam-covered rocks swept past them. Many a time had Joliet passed through these rapids. Probably, after all the perils through which he had safely come on the Great River, he looked only with joy upon this familiar rush of waters. Perhaps to the Indian boy came the thought of the demon whom his people feared in the surging waters of the Mississippi. Surely another such demon lived in this troubled passage, with death in its relentless grasp.

As if to prove real the fears of the Indian, the demon of the water reached out a great wet arm and overturned the frail canoe. Tossed into the fierce current were Joliet and his French boatmen, the Indian boy, and the precious box of papers; while downstream went blindly bobbing the bark canoe. Wildly the men struggled in the rushing stream, the current all the while wrenching at their legs and playing with their feeble efforts. Joliet fought till the breath was gone from his lungs and the strength from his limbs. Then he lost consciousness.

The unpitying sun made a long arc in the heavens above the tossing human bodies. Four hours had Joliet been in the water when fishermen pulled him out on shore and brought him back to life. Two of his men were drowned; and his precious box of papers lay somewhere beneath the rushing waters.

And the Indian boy? He, too, had given up to the evil spirit of the rapids. No more would he pass like a waif from tribe to tribe; no longer would he try with eyes and tongue and fingers to learn the ways of his new white friends. Forever he had left the rolling hills and streams of the Great Valley, the green prairies so full of sunshine, and the woods so full of game. He had passed to the happy hunting-ground of his people.

V

THE BLACK GOWN

In the valley of the Mississippi it was summer again. Father Marquette, still sick, had not come back to the Illinois tribes. The Peorias and Kaskaskias, in their two villages on the Illinois River, lived comfortable, happy lives, for theirs was a beautiful and fertile valley in these sunny summer months. In the rich soil of the prairies the Indian women had planted seeds which had been carefully preserved from the year before. And now in the fields the young girls were working among the long rows of Indian corn and tending the bean-vines. In their season melons and squashes grew plentifully. The woods along the river were full of game; and in the quiet water of the Illinois, fish by the hundred swam to and fro, an easy target for the swift-winged arrow of the Indian youth. Far back on the plains roamed great herds of buffalo, which afforded both sport and food for the Indians. When fall came, the Indians would surround a herd of buffalo and then set fire to the prairie, taking care to leave an open space by which the frightened animals could escape. As the big animals passed out through this break in the circle of fire, they were easily shot by the Indian hunters.

All up and down the river and over on the Lake of the Illinois, the winter of 1674 fell upon the land with stinging fierceness. The air was so cold that it was almost brittle. The winds howled and swept through the valley with gusts that drove the Indians chilled to their firesides; while the snow, as it piled higher and higher, often brought despair to the men scattered far and wide on their long winter hunts. Sometimes the deer were so lean as to be scarcely worth the shooting. From the Mississippi to the cold shores of the Lakes the men of the Illinois tribes were hunting and trapping and trading furs.

One day during this bleak winter there came striding into the village of the Kaskaskias an Indian of great note among the Illinois. He was Chassagoac, the famous Kaskaskia chief and fur trader. Having just come from the upper shores of Lake Michigan, he reported that near Green Bay he had come upon Father Marquette with two Frenchmen, setting out at last for the villages of the Illinois. Coming into camp with a deer on his back, he had shared his meat with these white men and on the next day had set out with them down the west shore of the Lake. The courageous priest was still far from well, but he was determined to keep his promise to the Illinois Indians. Accompanied by a number of Illinois men who were out on the winter hunt, and by the Illinois women who had packed the canoes and equipments across the portage from Green Bay to the Lake, the party made their way slowly southward along the shore.

Father Marquette spent part of the time teaching the Indians; while his two men, Pierre and Jacques, mended the guns of the Indian hunters and went out with them in search of game. Their canoes were too frail to stand much of the weather that now hung about the edge of the Lake. Floating ice drove them ashore again and again. Rain, sleet, and fierce, chilling winds kept them off the water for days at a time, while deep snows impeded their progress on land.

Early in December, they reached the mouth of the Chicago River, where, moving inland a few leagues, the white men built a rude cabin and made ready to encamp for the winter. Marquette still suffered greatly and could go no farther. Here Chassagoac and his Illinois followers left the party and came on to the village; but not before they had bought of the whites, for three fine beaver skins, a cubit of the French tobacco. Then they had journeyed on to bring the news that the Black Gown would come in the spring. Great was the rejoicing among the Illinois.

Weeks had passed when Jacques, the priest's servant, came to one of the Illinois camps and told of how the Black Gown lay sick in the cabin near the Lake. Thereupon the Indians sent back a delegation with corn and dried meat and pumpkins and beaver skins. With these presents they asked for powder and other merchandise. The priest replied that he had come to encourage peace — that he did not wish them to make war upon the Miamis — and so he could not send them powder; but he loaded them down for their twenty-league journey with hatchets and knives and beads and mirrors.

Now it happened that there were two white traders who had also ventured into the land of the Illinois; and from their cabins they brought supplies to the sick priest. One of these men, who called himself a surgeon, stayed awhile at the lonely cabin of Marquette, glad to hear mass and do what he could to relieve the sufferings of the black-gowned father.

It was with exceeding great joy that the white men in their cabin near the Lake and the Indians in their hunting-camps and villages along the river welcomed the warmer winds from the south that broke up the ice in the river and unlocked the wintry hold that had bound the land. Wild animals appeared and meat became plentiful once more. The snow melted down into rushing streams or sank into the friendly earth. As the sun became warmer at midday, the Indian women prepared for the season of planting.

On the 8th day of April, in the year 1675, a shout of welcome went up in the Kaskaskia village, for the long-expected priest had come. This quiet man, kind of face and gentle of manner, found himself among friends who looked with sorrow at the signs of sickness graven upon his patient face. They knew as well as he that he had not many months to live. But they saw also upon his face a wonderful joy, for the priest had accomplished the one great purpose that had upheld him in the weary weeks of suffering — he had come again to preach to the Illinois Indians.

In one cabin after another the good Father spoke to the chiefs and warriors who gathered to hear him. Finding the cabins too small, he held a great meeting in the open air on a broad level prairie. Here the whole village gathered. The chiefs and elders seated themselves next to the priest; and around them stood hundreds of young Indian braves; and still farther from the centre of the vast circle of red men were gathered the women and children of the tribe. For a long time he talked to them, and with each message he gave them presents after the manner of Indian councils.

This was the last visit of the black-robed priest to the Illinois Indians. His strength soon failed him, and with Jacques and Pierre he started back up the river and across to the Lake, hoping against hope that he might reach the Mission of St. Ignace at Mackinac before he died. Friendly Indians went with them more than thirty leagues of the way, contending with one another for the privilege of carrying his few belongings.

Finally they reached the Lake and embarked. Jacques and Pierre paddled the canoe along the shore, as each day the priest grew weaker. He had always prayed that he might die like his patron saint, St. Francis Xavier, in the far and lonely wilderness of his ministry. One Friday evening, about the middle of May, he told his companions with great joy that he would die on the morrow. As they passed the mouth of a small river, Marquette, pointing to a low hill rising beside it, asked his two men to bury him there.

They carried him ashore and built for his protection a rude cabin of bark. There he died quietly on Saturday, May 18, 1675. He was buried by his two men on the rising knoll which he had chosen; and over his grave they rang his little chapel bell, and erected a rude cross to mark the spot.

Some time later a party of Kiskakon Indians, returning from a hunting trip, came by the site of the lonely grave. They had known Father

Marquette years before when he lived on the shores of Lake Superior. Now they determined to carry his remains to the church at the Mission of St. Ignace. Reverently they gathered up the precious bones, dried and prepared them after their own Indian fashion, laid them in a box of birch bark, and bore them in state with a convoy of thirty canoes to the Mission at Mackinac. There in a vault of the church the remains of Father Marquette were laid away with funeral honors; and there priests and traders venerated his memory and Indians came to pray at his tomb.

And out in the valley of the Illinois, the tribes to whom he had made his last pilgrimage mourned the death of their gentle-spirited visitor; and the Peorias, as they went about their daily occupations in fields or lodges, on the prairies or on the streams, often thought of the day in June when the black-robed priest and his French companion had walked up the little pathway and stood out to meet them in the glorious sunshine at their old village on the banks of the Iowa River.

VI

"THE IROQUOIS ARE COMING"

"THE Iroquois are coming!" It was a cry that shook the heart of even the boldest among the Illinois Indians. Fierce as the northwest wind in winter, the cruel, bloodthirsty red men from the East had spread terror in their path all along the Great Lakes and out as far as the Mississippi. Down near the mouth of the Ohio, Marquette and Joliet on their memorable voyage in 1673 had found the Shawnee living in deadly fear of the warriors of the Five Nations.

Five years had passed over the lodges of the Peorias and Kaskaskias since that memorable summer; but fear still hung about the villages of the upper basin of the Great Valley. Three years of winter and summer hunts, of ripening corn and snow-locked landscape, had come and gone in the valley of the Illinois since the black-robed Marquette, gentle-faced and sick unto death, had bade farewell to the young Kaskaskia Indians and journeyed off with his two men along the shore of the Lake of the Illinois, never again to be seen alive save by his two faithful companions.

Through all these years the Indian women whispered their fears among themselves in the lodges; and the men, as they chipped their stone arrow-heads or shaped their strong bows, prayed to their manitous that if the Iroquois should come, the stone tips might fly straight and sure, lest their lodges be burned and the naked, howling men of the East carry torture and death among their women and children.

The Iroquois did come. It was in the year 1678 that war parties of these fierce tribes descended upon the valley of the Illinois. Out on the wooded plains the allied tribes advanced to meet them; while the women and children and the old men of the villages waited in dread and fear till runners came breathless to tell them of the repulse of the hated foe. This time the villages were saved, but fear did not die out with the victory. The valley lay like an ancient stronghold whose defenders had fought the besiegers away from the walls, yet slept on their arms in constant dread of a still more deadly attack.

In this same year of 1678, Allouez, another black-robed priest, came to settle among the Indians of the Kaskaskia village. He had come out to them for a few weeks in the spring of the year before, when eight of the tribes of the Illinois Nation were gathered at the village of the Kaskaskias that they might be in constant readiness to repel invasions of the Iroquois. Now the priest had come to stay, to baptize their children, and to teach them more about the strange manitou of whom Marquette had first told them. A huge cross, twenty-five feet high, had been erected in the middle of the town, and the Indians listened respectfully while he chanted the mass and preached to them.

The winter with its long hunting season went by; the river froze over and thawed out again; the time of planting came once more; and the children again played in the sun through the long hours of summer. So events moved on toward the strange happenings of the winter that followed. In the Kaskaskia village the women and girls had gathered the harvest of Indian corn and had stowed it away in caches or pits dug in the ground, lined with rushes and twigs and covered over for the long winter. It was a precious store, for it must provide corn for the spring sowing and food until the next harvest came around again. Then as the leaves dropped one by one from the trees along the river and the colder winds came, the whole village went off for the winter hunt.

It was the night before Christmas in 1679, and Allouez, the black-robed priest, still lingered in the Kaskaskia village, thinking, more than likely, of Christmas Eve in his beloved France far across the ocean, where amid the lights of a hundred candles priests were conducting midnight mass. Or perchance he thought of the high rock of Quebec where a frontier settlement held frowning watch above the river. Even it was hundreds of leagues nearer civilization than he.

But hark! There was a sound that brought the priest out of his reveries and back to the forest and rocks along the snow-skirted river of the wilderness. Out of the darkness came a group of Indians — young braves from some wandering bands of Miamis and Mascoutins. Well did Allouez know these tribes, for he had lived with them years before in their village near the portage of the Fox River. Strange and exciting was the news which they brought him this night. Alarm deepened on the priest's face as he gathered his few belongings and made his way across the snow and through the woods to the village of the Miamis and Mascoutins.

The village of the Kaskaskias, on the north shore of the Illinois, now lay silent and deserted. The lonely lodges and the well-filled caches alone gave evidence that the Indians would return. Many leagues down the river was the village of the Peorias. Here, too, the young men were off on the winter hunt; but the older men and the women and children were still at the village. With them was Nicanopé, brother of Chassagoac, and many others of the Kaskaskia tribe.

Not a hint of the message that brought such alarm to Allouez at the upper village had come to the Peorias. Aside from the ever-present dread of the Iroquois, that lurked in each Indian's mind, they lived as peacefully as the hardships of winter would permit. Smoke from their lodges rose up into the wintry sky, or veered off to the south and east when the blasts of wind swept across the plains. The river was open, and by the bank on either side lay pirogues — heavy canoes fifty feet long and big enough to hold more than a score of men.

Less than two weeks had passed since Allouez had fled from the upper village. The sun had been up an hour or more, and the Peoria village was bustling with life. Warriors and old men stalked here and there in their winter garments of buffalo hide, or sat smoking and gazing placidly upon river and sky. The ever busy women sat weaving rush mats or bestirred themselves in gathering wood. Children played about in the open, and on the sunny side of the lodges zealous mothers had already set up on end the brown papooses bound like little mummies in the cradles.

Then, stirring the village as an arrow startles a covey of birds, came the wild cry, "The Iroquois." From behind a jutting point up the river swept a long line of canoes. Indescribable confusion followed. On both sides of the river men sprang for their bows and arrows; while women, hardly pausing to seize their babes, scuttled away between the lodges and on to the friendly woods back on the hill. With them went the young girls and children, fleeing like scared rabbits.

Meantime the current of the river bore the canoes down to the village. They turned to the left, and a tall figure leaped from the nearest canoe to the bank and then stood quietly watching the confusion of the villagers. Some of the warriors fled to the woods with the women. Others with eager weapons were about to attack the newcomers, when a cry from one of their chiefs on the other shore made them pause. He had seen that, although the men from the canoes, armed with guns and ready for war, could have shot down a dozen Illinois in their first confused scramble for weapons, they had not fired a single shot. These men were evidently not Iroquois, but Frenchmen who seemed bent on peace rather than battle.

Quickly the calumet was raised by the reassured Peorias, and another was offered by the French. The canoes were drawn up to the bank, and together the white men and the villagers went to the lodges. Old men reappeared from the woods and women came out of their hiding-places. Children with wary eyes looked up into the faces of three friars, Fathers of the

Recollet Order with gray robes and pointed cowls, who took them by the hand and poured out friendly but unintelligible words.

In the lodges the warriors and chiefs — now that the fear of an Iroquois attack had subsided — welcomed the visitors with every sign of good will. They rubbed their feet with bear's oil and the fat of buffalo and fed them with the best the village had to offer. Then they sat down for a council of peace, ready to hear the message of the white men. Chassagoac was away on the hunt, and so his brother Nicanopé was the highest in rank of the Indian chiefs who were present.

There were bold men among the French in this council; and the Indians gazed with kindling eyes upon the tall figure of the white chief who had first leaped from his canoe, and upon the dark face of another man who seemed to be next in command. This second man had sat in the canoe at the farther end of the line that had swept down to the village. He was among the last to come ashore; but something unusual and strangely awkward about his movements caught the quick attention of the Indians. In the council, however, their eyes turned from the swarthy, black-haired lieutenant to the tall white leader as he rose to speak.

Robert Cavelier, Sieur de La Salle, was a man still under middle age, but an indomitable will and a restless and unceasing activity had already crowded his years with the experiences of an ordinary lifetime. No Indian could look upon his cold, finely chiseled features and unflinching eyes without feeling the relentless force of the man. They listened with quiet attention to his words.

He offered them a present of Martinique tobacco and some hatchets, saying that first of all he wished to tell them of a thing he had done and explain it to them. A few days before he and his men had come to the village of their brother tribe, the Kaskaskias, many leagues up the river. The village was empty where they had hoped to find friendly Indians with food. Unable to kill game, they were in danger of starvation. They well knew how precious was the corn hidden in the caches of the deserted town, but in their extremity they had borrowed some; and now they wished to pay for it in presents or to return it to the Peorias if the Indians could not spare it. At the same time he added that if they could not let him have food for his men, he would go down the river to their neighbors, the Osages, and there set up the forge which he had brought to mend their knives and hatchets and make them new tools for the warpath and the chase.

Behind the impassive faces of Nicanopé, Omawha, and other chiefs were minds alive to a new situation. This man was not a mere black robe, come among them to preach and to baptize their dying; nor was he a lone trader, a *coureur de bois*, passing by in his bold profession of trapping, hunting, and trading furs. Here was a great chief with men at his back, a warrior with fire-spitting guns, a trader with canoes full of hatchets and knives and tobacco and a forge to keep their weapons in order and to make them new ones. Surely he was a great and powerful man who had come into their country this cold winter day, and well would it be for the tribes of the Illinois if he stayed among them.

But what is this he is saying? He speaks of the Iroquois. They, too, are subjects of the King of the French. Yet if the bold Iroquois should fall upon them, La Salle and his followers would be with the Illinois, would give them guns, and would help them protect their villages from the onslaughts of the Five Nations. Only they must let him build a fort near their village for the protection of his men. He wished, also, to build a great canoe, big enough to hold all his men and goods, and by means of it to travel down the Illinois to the Mississippi and thence on its broad current to where it emptied into the Gulf of Mexico — so that he might bring back more hatchets and presents.

The Indians were overjoyed. Many of the Kaskaskias were present, and among them was Nicanopé, one of their chiefs. They told La Salle to keep the corn he had taken at the upper village, and begged him to stay among them and set up his forge and build his fort. If he wished to descend the river that flowed through the length of the Great Valley, he would find it an easy waterway and the country through which it flowed a land of beauty and plenty.

Finally the conference broke up and the Indians retired to their own lodges in great happiness of mind. Among them none was happier than Chief Omawha, for La Salle had shown him special favor and had given him two hatchets and a number of knives.

VII

THE SECRET COUNCIL

Night came on cold and still. In the river the floating particles of ice grew into a solid sheet until the stream was covered from shore to shore. La Salle, having retired with his men to the quarters assigned, set guards about the lodges and dropped off to sleep. In their own long lodges the Indians rolled up in blankets and dreamed perchance of the warpath and the triumphant return of warriors bearing the scalps of the Iroquois.

In the darkness off to the northeast half a dozen Indians quietly filed along the trail toward the village. They were loaded down with burdens. Into the village they slipped stealthily and came to the lodge of the chief. Soon furtive figures of Indian men were creeping from this lodge and that until the chiefs and warriors had gathered in a secret night council with the strangers from the northeast.

La Salle and his men slept on in peace, while Nicanopé and Omawha and their friends sat in a circle and listened to the words of the nocturnal visitors. Monso, a Mascoutin chief, was the spokesman, and with him were five or six Miamis. The burdens they bore were kettles and hatchets and knives, as presents to accompany the story they had come so secretly to tell to the Illinois. And this was their message. La Salle was a friend of the Iroquois. Even now he was on his way to the enemies of the Illinois on the Great River beyond. He would give these foes arms and ammunition and come back with them from the west while the Iroquois closed in from the east. Thus, surrounded and trapped, the Illinois would meet their ruin. Their only hope was to prevent La Salle from going farther and from joining their enemies on the Mississippi.

Monso told his message with effect; and fear fell upon the men of the Peoria village as they pondered over the warning which had come to them in this weird night council. Beneath the dirt floor of the lodge they buried the presents which Monso had brought. The strangers, having given their disquieting news, slipped out into the dark and disappeared as quietly as they had come; while the Peoria men crept back to their lodges and tried to forget the alarm which Monso had brought into the village.

At the secret council in which Monso and the Miamis told their story there was one who did not share the fear of his fellows; but he said nothing. The chief Omawha sat quietly throughout the council and passed out with his brother chiefs without a word. But in the early morning he came in secret to La Salle and unfolded to him the story of the night.

As on the face of the river that had frozen over since the arrival of the French, there had come by morning a change in the mood of the Illinois Indians. Yesterday they were happy and friendly, full of smiles and good words for La Salle and his dark-skinned companion and the score and more of their men. To-day they were cold and suspicious. They believed Monso and feared — feared for their homes and for the lives of every man, woman, and child of the tribes. The dread of the Iroquois rose fresh in their minds as they saw in the powerful Frenchmen the allies of their enemies. The cold sun of winter rose to its highest in the sky and started on its journey down to the west. Something must be done and at once or they were lost.

Nicanopé sent word to the lodge of La Salle that he was preparing a feast for him and his men. Presently through the streets of the Indian town stalked the strange procession of white men on their way to the feast. From the entrance of every lodge curious Indians watched the visitors pass. Most of them, perhaps, followed the movements of La Salle — long of limb and steadfast of face, with keen eyes, and hair that flowed down over his collar. But many eyes strayed from him to his dark-faced, black-haired companion, who appeared to be second in command and whose right arm as he walked hung by his side with a peculiar heaviness. This man was Henry de Tonty; and in all the Western world there beat no braver heart than his. Nor did the gallant La Salle have truer friend and follower in the troublous days that were at hand.

Besides these two men there were perhaps thirty Frenchmen — some of them weather-beaten with many years' experience in the wilds, and some of them young and not long arrived from distant France. Here also were three long-robed and sandaled friars, not gowned in black like Marquette and the lately departed Allouez, but in gray gowns and hoods. One was young and short and vigorous; one was old, yet full of spirit. The third walked with a pompous tread, and a complacent pride sat upon his round face.

Into the lodge where the feast was to be given the white men filed and seated themselves with the chiefs and men of the Illinois tribes. Less than twenty-four hours had passed since the midnight visitors from the Miami village had told their tale in low voices in the same lodge. It was not alone a feast that was to be celebrated; for in the minds of the Illinois was the determination that these bold men should be stopped by some means from going on to incite their Western enemies. As they looked upon the two leaders and their company, hostile were their thoughts, though their eyes did not show it. Yes, La Salle and his men must be stopped. And so as they squatted on mats on the earthen floor of the lodge and waited for the feast, the chief Nicanopé rose and began to speak.

He had not brought the white men there, he said, so much to feast their bodies as to cure them of the strange madness which possessed them of going on down the Mississippi. No one went there except to his death. Terrible tribes who by force of numbers could overwhelm the French dwelt along the shores. The waters of the river were full of huge serpents and deadly monsters. Even if their great canoe saved them from these perils, the channel of the river ran over rapids and fell in torrents over steep precipices, and finally shot down into a great abyss where it was lost under the earth, and no living man knew where it went. Such would be the awful fate of the French if they pursued their journey farther.

The Peorias squatted in silence as they listened to the chief's warning. Surely the white men would not venture into such dangers. They watched the faces of La Salle and his followers for some flicker of fear. Upon the countenances of La Salle and Tonty no shadow moved. Here and there among their men were *coureurs de bois* — men who had lived in the Western country and who understood the words of Nicanopé. They translated them in whispers to their comrades. Uneasy looks crossed the faces of these less experienced adventurers, and the keen eyes of the Peorias caught flashes of fear and dismay on the face of many a French voyager. Their own hearts rejoiced at these signs of alarm, but their faces showed nothing save calm unconcern.

But in the words of La Salle they found little comfort when in turn he rose to reply. For the kindness of Nicanopé in warning them, he thanked him most cordially. But he was not daunted. If the dangers were great so much greater would be their glory. Frenchmen were happy, he said, to perish in carrying the name of their great chief to the ends of the earth. He believed that the story of deadly perils related by Nicanopé was prompted either by the friendly desire of the Illinois to have the white men remain in their village or else by some evil spirit who had whispered words of distrust. If the Illinois were in truth friendly to him, let them tell him frankly of the things which disturbed them. Otherwise he must believe that the friendship they had first shown came only from their lips.

Nicanopé, discouraged at the failure of his ruse, made no reply, but presented his guests with food. When they had eaten sagamite and venison and buffalo meat in silence, La Salle once more rose and continued his speech. He was not surprised to find the other tribes jealous of the advantages about to be enjoyed by the Illinois from their relations with the French, nor was he surprised that the other tribes should start false rumors; but he was astonished that the Illinois should believe those tales and hide them from him who had been so frank. Then he turned and directed his words to the astounded Nicanopé: —

"I was not asleep, my brother, when Monso last night in secret told his tales against the French and said that I was a spy of the Iroquois. Under this very lodge the presents with which he tried to persuade you of the truth of his story are still buried. Why did he take his flight so quickly? Why did he not speak to you by daylight if he spoke the truth?"

The Illinois sat silent, but with agitated minds. Amazement and awe filled their wary eyes. What manner of man was this who, though asleep in his lodge, divined the hidden secrets of their midnight council? What great medicine gave him power over the things of the night as well as the day? Could he read their thoughts? The ringing voice of the white man continued: —

"Do you not know that, had I wished, in your confusion at my arrival, I could have killed you all? What need had I of Iroquois allies? Could I not this very hour with my soldiers slaughter all your chiefs and old men while your young men are off on the hunt? Look at our burdens. Are they not tools and merchandise for your benefit rather than weapons with which to attack you? Run after this liar Monso. Bring him back and let him face me whom he has never seen, yet whose plans he pretends to know."

There was a short pause. Nicanopé had no word to say. Monso was gone and a snow had fallen upon his tracks. They could not trace him and bring him back. Their plans had failed. The leader of the French was to them now a man of wonder as well as fear. Only Omawha of all the Illinois understood, but he said not a word. Red men and white passed out from the feast and returned to their lodges. The wooded hills across the frozen river swallowed the winter sun and early twilight closed down upon the white landscape.

By the lodges given up to the Frenchmen, La Salle set a guard, and then lay down to sleep. Tonty, after a last look at the village, turned in among the robes. In the other lodges, stretched upon mats and wrapped in buffalo skins, Indian men lay sleeping or thinking of the strange happenings of the night and day that were gone. If any had watched, as mayhap they did, they would have seen a second nightly gathering — this time in the shadows of the Frenchmen's lodges. Six figures stealthily exchanged words and signs; and then without noise crept past the farthest lodge and out across the snow toward the village of the Miamis whence Monso had come. They were some of those Frenchmen upon whose faces the observant Indians had seen signs of fear at the words of Nicanopé.

An hour went by, when a new light began to touch the sky and the woods. Out from the lodge of La Salle the tall figure of the leader stepped into the cold morning air. He looked about in surprise. Not one of his men was to be seen on guard. With quick, fierce stride he visited one after another of the lodges. In one of them he found only a single Frenchman, whose companions had not taken him into their plot.

Tonty, awaking, found his leader beside him with serious news upon his lips. Six of their men — cowards and knaves — had preferred the dangers of exposure and starvation to the dangers which Nicanopé had described. They had taken advantage of their position as guards to desert their leader in the hope of reaching the village from which Monso had come.

VIII

THE FORT CALLED CRÈVECŒUR

For ten days the air was snapping with cold, and the river beside the Peoria village remained frozen. In the hearts of the Peorias lingered the chill of fear, for in spite of his denunciation of Monso they could not banish their doubts of the French chief; and the dreaded Iroquois invasion, which had haunted them for years, was very present in their thoughts as the Frenchmen passed among them.

When Indians once see fear betrayed in public, they never forget; and now for some of La Salle's men the Peorias had only contempt, for not all of those who had shown fear at the words of Nicanopé had fled to the woods. Others of the French, such as Ako, the *coureur de bois*, were of a different breed. Bold, strong, experienced in woodcraft by many years in the wilds, they commanded at least consideration from the Indian warriors.

As for the three gray-robed friars, they did no harm and there was a curious mystery about their ceremonies that pleased the Indians' childlike hearts. One of these friars — Father Hennepin — looked far more like a man who loved the world and the joys of life. He strutted about the village with all priestly meekness smothered by his interest in his surroundings. Very conscious was he of his own greatness, and well satisfied that without him the little band of French would be in sore straits.

It was with different feelings that the Peorias looked upon La Salle and Tonty. They feared them greatly and still retained their suspicions, but with their fear and suspicion there was also respect and awe. They recognized in them the qualities an Indian loves — strength, utter fearlessness, and a determination that breaks down all obstacles. About each of these men there was mystery which baffled the wits of the Indians and excited their interest even more than did the medicine men of their own tribes.

Of the past of these two remarkable men the Indians knew nothing; they could not read the tale of danger and hardship that had marked the years of La Salle, or the story of the pitfalls and snares laid by his enemies for his destruction. They could not know that at Fort Frontenac, when La Salle was on his way to their country, one of his men had put poison in his food. Nor did they know of the incident at the Miami portage, where one of his followers, walking behind, had raised his gun to shoot his leader in the back and was prevented only by the quick arm of a comrade. They knew that six of the men had deserted and gone off into the woods, but they did not know that on that same day in their own village another of his treacherous knaves had again tried to poison him.

They knew nothing of the early experiences of Henry de Tonty, of the seas he had sailed and the fights he had fought by land and water in the service of the King of France. Nor did they yet know the faith with which he served his leader and friend La Salle. But a sure instinct told the red men that here were two men whom they would love as friends or fear as enemies.

One chill day followed another. Most of the young men were still off on the hunt and warpath. Those who remained at home mended their weapons, smoked, and idly watched the women at work on mats and robes — but never for a moment let go the thought or sight of the white strangers in their midst.

In the middle of January the ice melted, the air dropped its sting, and the friendly earth appeared from beneath the snow. La Salle and the friar Hennepin stepped into a canoe and paddled down the river to a point half a league below the village. Soon Tonty and the rest of the band joined them. On the left-hand side of the river, two hundred paces from the edge of the water, rose a small hill. In front of it there was a stretch of low swampy ground, and on either side were deep ravines.

The inquisitive Indians who slipped along the shore to watch the movements of the white men saw them at work digging a ditch behind the hill to connect the two ravines. Around the edge of the hill a line of earth was thrown up, making a wall which sloped down into ditch and ravine and marsh. Then a palisade of logs was erected twenty feet high. Inside this stockade in two corners the busy Frenchmen built lodgings for themselves, a cabin for the three friars in the third corner, and a storehouse in the fourth. Along the rear wall the forge was set up, and in the very midst of the inclosure were the quarters of La Salle and Tonty. To this stronghold beside the Illinois River, La Salle gave the name of Fort Crèvecœur.

Another work that astonished the Indians still more went on at the bank of the river. Here the men felled great trees, hewed them into timbers, sawed planks, and began to build a mighty canoe such as the men of the tribe had never seen. With a forty-foot keel and a twelve-foot beam, no Peoria could doubt that it would make its way safely down the Great River that ran through the land of their enemies.

Many times did the Indians wonder in their hearts whether or not the French chief believed in the tales of terror that Nicanopé had spoken. They saw him little at the village now, for he and his men had moved down to the new Fort Crèvecœur; but there was never a time when Indian figures, none too busy at home, did not peer through the bushes or sit boldly by, fascinated by the busy doings at the fort and primitive shipyard.

Far to the south, meanwhile, a band of the young men were on their way home from the warpath. Many leagues ahead of them hurried one of the band, a young warrior sent on to tell the village of their approach. Over the plains and through tangled woods he plodded on weary feet. He was less than three leagues from the village now, but he was tired and very hungry. As he trudged along, he came upon a figure somewhat strange to his eyes. But he had seen the traders who came now and then down the rivers from Canada and he knew this man for a Frenchman. He saw, what was more pleasing to his needs, that the stranger carried four wild turkeys. Far spent with hunger, he called to him and asked for food.

The white man handed him one of the wild turkeys. With eager hands the Indian lighted a fire, swung over it a kettle which he carried with him and proceeded to cook the fowl. While the fire licked the sides of the kettle the strange white man asked him of his journey and inquired about the Great River that ran through the countries of the South. The young warrior picked up from the fire a charred bit of wood and with it drew, on a piece of bark, a careful diagram which showed the course of the river and the streams that fell into it. Then he gave the names of these streams and told of the tribes that dwelt along them, and the white man wrote them down in his own language on the bark.

Everywhere along the Mississippi the young Indian had traveled in a pirogue, and never was there a fall or rapids to obstruct his way. Not even were there sandbars, save near the mouth in the heat of summer-time. The two men talked of these things for some time, while the Indian rested and appeased his hunger. Finally the Frenchman gave to the red man a hatchet and asked him to say to no one that he had met him. With his lips thus sealed by the white man's gift and his stomach made glad by the white man's game, the young Indian turned aside and accompanied his new friend with some awe to the newly built fort, instead of passing on to the village.

Early on the morning of the next day, in the village of the Peorias, a group of Indians were gathered in the lodge of one of the chiefs. They were feasting in great joy upon the meat of a bear — a delicacy much prized among them. Suddenly a form darkened the entrance to the lodge and La Salle strode in among the squatted Indians. He paused in their midst and looked about before he spoke. A smile of triumph was on his lips.

"Perhaps you do not know," he said, "that the Maker of all things takes especial care of the French. In answer to my prayers he has revealed to me the truth concerning the Great River, which your frightful tales prevented me from learning."

Then he went on to tell the astounded Indians of all the windings of the Mississippi, of the smooth current upon which a canoe might ride to its mouth. He described each river that entered it from the east and from the west, and named each tribe that dwelt on its borders. Nowhere was there fall or rapids to obstruct one's way, and only where the river broadened out at the mouth were there shallows and sand and mud-bars. Each twist and turn, each rocky cliff and entering stream he seemed to know as if he had spent months in paddling up and down the river in an Indian pirogue.

The bear meat was forgotten. The Indians sat silent, their hands clapped to their mouths in amazement. What great power or "medicine" did this man possess that enabled him to watch what occurred in secret nightly councils, and to see and describe hundreds of leagues of the course and valley of the Great River he had never visited? Like children caught in mischief, they confessed that all he said was true and that they had deceived him only to keep him in their midst.

La Salle departed from the lodge, leaving them with troubled minds. How strange and wonderful were these men of fair faces and flowing hair. And what did their presence bode for the Indian? Were they their friends, or were they at heart friends of the Iroquois? Who knew how near to their villages were bands of painted warriors of the Five Nations? Yet, though suspicion lay heavy upon their hearts, they looked with covetous eyes upon the hatchets and knives, the kettles and weapons that the white men brought.

IX

THE WHITE INVASION

Not a day passed but the Illinois followed with inquisitive eyes the movements of the men at the fort. They watched the great white beams by the river bank as the Frenchmen laid them out and fastened them together till the growing ship began to look like the white skeleton of an immense buffalo lying bleached and bare to the four winds of heaven.

Omawha, the friendly chief, adopted as a son the short young friar of La Salle's party; and so the gray robe of Father Membré passed freely in and out of the lodges of the village. Like one of the chief's family, he ate of the Indian fare and slept on buffalo robes beside smouldering lodge-fires. His fellow-whites were at the new fort; and he alone watched the coming of spring in the Indian town.

As winter began to break up, the hunting parties came home. The war party from the South brought captives with them, and the village became more populous. But Chassagoac, the indefatigable hunter, was still off in the woods.

Even in the long stretches of the Indian country, winterlocked and drear, news traveled fast; and the Illinois well knew that runners were carrying all up and down the Great Valley tales of the white men among the Peorias, of the fort on the hill, and of the ship that was to sail down the long river. It was, therefore, with concern that the Peorias saw one day a gathering of Indians encamped about the fort. They were Osages and Chickasaws and Arkansas — tribes that lived along the Mississippi far to the south. And the villagers knew that they — jealous of the advantages of the Illinois — would tell the white chief of the easy navigation of the river and urge him to come down and live in their country.

Not many days passed before another group of Indians arrived, this time from the Far West — so far beyond the Mississippi River that they told of long-haired Spaniards who rode to war on horses and fought with lances. One of the Indians proudly wore at his belt a tobacco pouch made from the hoof of a horse with some of the skin of the leg attached. A week later came still another delegation to see the far-famed whites. They were Sioux from the distant Northwest, in the land where the Mississippi took its rise; and they were long-time foes of the tribes of the Illinois.

In the councils of the Illinois Indians there was much debate. Each chief had his own opinion. It was a time of new and strange happenings. Long had the Illinois tribe lived proud and comfortable in the valley. They had hunted and fished up and down the rivers at their will. In the open spaces before their arbor-like lodges they gambled and smoked and basked in the summer days, the bright sun warming their naked bodies. And when they were tired of basking, they put on their garments of red and black paint, gathered howling in the war dance, and set out on a raid against the Sacs and Foxes west of the Lake of the Illinois, or the Sioux by the head-waters of the Mississippi, or the Osages and Arkansas and other tribes on its southern banks. Often, too, war came to them, and sometimes so desperate that even the Indian women fought hand to hand with the enemy in the spaces between the lodges of the village.

But of late years had come new dangers. Faint whisperings reached them of white-faced men who brought from across the sea weapons that roared like the thunder and smote their victims like bolts of lightning. Their ancient enemies, the Iroquois, bought these weapons with furs and carried their ravages upon the Western tribes with increased deadliness. Then they learned that the white men themselves were beginning to appear on the Great Lakes — first at the eastern end, but finally on the shores of Lake Superior and the Lake of the Illinois.

By and by there pushed out from the Lakes into the valleys of the Wisconsin and the Illinois, and even as far as the Upper Mississippi, the black-robed priest and the lone fur trader. Restless *coureurs de bois* floated down the rivers in greater numbers. They set up cabins and wintered in the lands which once the Indians alone knew. Priests, having come to visit, came again to stay. Soldiers and explorers pierced the far wilderness. Strange canoes shot up and down the waters. The ringing of axes sounded in the woods, and forts sprang up. These new bold habitants brought hatchets that put the old stone clubs to shame, kettles such as the Indians had never dreamed of, knives with a deadly edge, blankets of bright color and fine texture — and the childlike heart of the Indian was made glad.

A new force had come upon the land and the end of the old days was at hand. No Indian fully realized it. The novelty of the white man's ways and the charm of his gifts shortened their vision, and so they lived each in the eventful present. But as surely as the river flowed down to the sea, the Great Valley was passing out of their grasp. The wide reaches of meadow, the leagues of hill and plain, the waters that ran past a thousand hills, virgin forest for their game, live soil for their corn, all the freedom and bounty of the greatest valley in the world had been theirs — a valley to roam over at will, to hunt in with the changing seasons, to fight for in the glory of battle among themselves.

The red men did not know that things were really going to be different, for they were not wise in prophecy. But they were restless in mind and they felt some of the dangers of the present; for like children they feared a power they could not understand.

Among the Illinois tribes this vague fear rose and then died out in the more placid courses of their lives. Then lurking suspicion seized upon some event and all was alarm again. So it was with other tribes, for fierce courage and abject terror alternated in the Indian mind.

Over on the shores of the Fox River and about the foot of the Lake of the Illinois lived the nation of Miamis. They were relatives of the Illinois tribes as well as neighbors, and their language was much the same. The fear of the Iroquois, armed with white men's weapons, had seized such firm hold upon them that once they migrated to the Mississippi. But in a time of peace they had wandered back to their former homes. Now and then trouble arose between Miami and Illinois, and for years they waged war upon each other.

The secret embassy of Monso with his Miami followers left the Illinois uneasy. How did the Miamis know so much about the Iroquois? If the Iroquois came, would the Miamis join them against the people of the Illinois? And what would La Salle and Tonty and the men at the fort do? Round and round went question and answer as the spring came on. Soon would Chassagoac, their greatest chief, be back with his hunters. Perhaps his wisdom might help them.

In the meantime they went about their duties and pleasures in the village. The end of February, 1680, came, and on the last day of the month they saw a great stirring — an unusual bustling about and strutting up and down on the part of the gray-robed Hennepin. Finally he planted his figure solidly in a canoe laden with skins and weapons and knives and kettles. The veteran woodsman, Michael Ako, was with him and Antoine Auguel — called the Picard by his comrades because he came from Picardy in France. Bidding good-bye to those on the bank, the three men slipped swiftly down the current and out of sight. What new move was this?

The Indians wondered until the next day when the village welcomed the return of one of its hunting parties, just arrived from down the river. They had passed Ako and his fellows about sundown the night before and tried to persuade them to return. But no, they were bound for the land of the Sioux, where Ako meant to trade in furs and learn of the country; and the affable friar pronounced himself bound to undertake the great perils of an unknown land to preach to the Indians of the Upper Mississippi. So the red hunters let them pass — the boastful friar and his two companions. Little did the three know what experiences were to befall them before they saw again the lights of white men's cabins.

On the day that the hunters returned, those who watched the fort saw two other canoes set out, this time going up the river. Here was a still more important event, for in one of the boats was the figure of La Salle himself. Six Frenchmen were with him, and also a Mohegan warrior whom they called the Wolf, from the name of his people. The Indians waited in wonderment. Was the fort being deserted? Not yet, for the mysterious Tonty, his arm swinging heavily at his side, passed about among the men at the fort giving orders in the absence of his chief.

X

THE MYSTERIOUS HAND

The Indians of the Peoria village were interested spectators of the events which were being acted out by the band of Frenchmen. Father Membré lived in their town and they gave him respectful attention. Among themselves they talked much of his white friends within the stockaded walls of the fort. There were scarcely a dozen men with Tonty now, and upon them the Indians looked with a mixture of curiosity, contempt, and awe. Among them there were ship carpenters and soldiers, on some of whose faces rascality and cowardice were written. Had the Peorias not seen them nervous with fear while Nicanopé told them of the imaginary terrors of the river, and at a public council, too, — what could more clearly stamp the coward?

The old friar Ribourde shuffled about in his gray gown and bare sandaled feet, saying mass among the Frenchmen as Membré did among the Peorias. The strong-armed man, Le Meilleur, whom his comrade called La Forge, swung the hammer on the red-hot iron and mended the tools of the French at the precious forge. Down by the river, Moyse Hillaret and La Roze and the other shipbuilders and carpenters laid out and joined together the ribs of the huge wooden skeleton. Among these brawny men was a muscular young lad from Paris named Renault, L'Espérance, a brave-hearted young servant of La Salle, and Boisrondet, a man of higher birth than the rest and a special friend of Tonty. But it was not of these men that the Peorias talked most to the bands of hunters and warriors returning now to the village — it was of La Salle, the white chief, who had left the fort, and of Tonty, the man of mystery, who remained in charge of the garrison.

The Indians could not understand the curious commander of the fort. Why was his skin darker than that of his comrades and his hair so black — like the hair of their own Indian women, though not so straight? But most of all they wondered at the queer way in which he used his right hand. They told the newly arrived Indians of the day the white men came to the village. At the feast of welcome Tonty had used his left hand always as he ate of their sagamite and meat, and now they watched him as he passed here and there among his men. If he pulled a canoe up on shore or grasped a piece of timber down at the shipyard it was never with his right hand. Yet they had seen him deal blows with that mysterious right hand which had the effect of an Indian war club. With what strange "medicine" his powerful arm was gifted they could not tell; and it was partly for that reason that they feared him. Often, in the adventurous years that followed, red-skinned warriors in many parts of the Great Valley were startled and awed by the ease with which this man could by one heavy swing of his right hand break the teeth or crack the skull of an unruly Indian.

If the Peorias could have looked off into lands they had never seen and read the events of other times and places, as it now seemed to them that La Salle could do, they might have found the explanation of the mystery. Not many years before the white men came to the Peoria village, the little island of Sicily, in the far-away Mediterranean Sea, was in the throes of a bitter war. Along its coast grim-mouthed ships of war and galleys, propelled by the oars of convicts and captives, bore the flags of three nations — France, Holland, and Spain.

In one of the battles the figure of Henry de Tonty might have been seen fighting under the flag of France. For many years he had so fought — four campaigns on ships of war and three on galleys — and had gained high rank in the service. But he was not of French birth. His father had come to Paris as an exile from Naples in the sunny land of Italy after taking a prominent part in the Neapolitan Revolt of 1647. Sicily like Naples had long been under the hated rule of Spain, and now the Sicilians rising in revolt had called upon the French for help. The Spaniards, hard pressed, called a Dutch fleet in to aid them. So the war was waged, now on sea, now on land; and Tonty, in the thick of the battle, rejoiced in a struggle to free men of his father's country from the Spanish yoke.

The cannon flashed and roared. Men fell all about him. A hand grenade, thrown by the enemy, burst near by into a thousand pieces and tore away the right hand of Henry de Tonty. He was captured by the enemy and held prisoner for six months. Then he was released in exchange for the governor's son. In place of his lost member he substituted a hand of metal which he wore encased in a glove. But now peace had settled upon the Mediterranean, and the restless Tonty joined La Salle and came across the sea to where the land was young and adventure lay in every river valley.

In time the Indians learned the story of his "medicine" arm; and throughout the Great Valley, from the Lakes to the mouth of the Mississippi, Tonty came to be known to the tribes as the "Man with the Iron Hand."

XI

"WE ARE ALL SAVAGES"

The winter was a long one in the valley of the Illinois. Food was scarce and the little band at Fort Crèvecœur had many hungry days. Once there passed the Peoria village a canoe headed downstream, and in it the Indians recognized two of the men who had set out with La Salle. The canoe was loaded to the gunwale with provisions. Where could the white chief have found such a store? The answer came later from the lips of Chassagoac himself when he returned from his winter hunt.

Trailing through the woods one day Chassagoac had seen the smoke of a camp-fire. Drawing near with two of his men he met a strange white man who presented him with a red blanket, a kettle, and some hatchets and knives. Chassagoac soon learned that the stranger was La Salle, the chief of the company of white men who had settled near the Peoria village. The white man knew the fame of Chassagoac, and the two chiefs sat down for a long conference, during which La Salle told of all the things that had happened at the village and explained to the red chief that his men at the fort were in sad need of food. If the red brother would furnish them with provisions he would repay him on his return from the East.

Then, as the kindly Chassagoac promised his help, the white chief went on to tell of his plans. He told of the fort and the great ship that was being built on the riverside. Even now he was on his way to the East to make peace with the Iroquois for the Illinois, and he would come back with arms for their defense and with merchandise to distribute among them; and many more Frenchmen would return with him to establish themselves at the Illinois villages. He told of his plans for a great expedition down the river to its mouth, whence he could set up more easy trade and bring from across the sea goods of all kinds for the tribes of the Illinois.

Chassagoac was deeply interested, and with generous hand he filled a canoe with stores from the caches of the deserted Kaskaskia village near at hand. He urged the white man to return soon, and assured him that what had been said about the beauty and the easy passage of the

Mississippi was all true. Then after courteous leave-taking the two chiefs separated. La Salle continued his way up the river, while two of his men paddled the canoe full of supplies down the stream to Fort Crèvecœur. After parting from La Salle, Chassagoac went on with his hunting until the day when he came once more to the village of his people. Here his arrival was welcomed by the Indians, whose fears were perhaps somewhat quieted by his stanch belief in the white men. He spent much time with the gray-robed friars and talked with them of how he had met the black-gowned Marquette on the distant shores of the Lake of the Illinois and had given him part of the deer he had killed. Indeed, Chassagoac thought so well of the teachings of the friars that he agreed to follow their strange manitou, and so was baptized after the manner of the Frenchmen.

Meanwhile two more Frenchmen slipped down the river past the village to the fort, which they reached about the middle of April. At once there was much stirring among the whites, and soon Tonty with a few of his men passed up the river toward the village of the Kaskaskias. The Indians were curious at this new move. Some time before the veteran Ako, together with the Picard and the friar Hennepin, had set off down the stream, and La Salle with more men had gone up the river the day after. Now even Tonty was departing.

The Indians watched closely the handful of men who remained in the stockaded walls. Noël Le Blanc and Nicolas Laurent, the two men who had lately arrived at the fort, had come with orders from La Salle to Tonty to build another fort at the upper village. In Tonty's absence, Le Blanc seemed to be moving about like a restless spirit, talking earnestly among the men. With the blacksmith and the ship carpenters in particular he appeared to be plotting some deep-laid scheme.

Into the village of the Peorias, likewise, crept strange whisperings and rumors. Men from other villages came to tell them that their distrusted neighbors, the Miamis, had been seeking an alliance with the hated Iroquois. Was the fort to be abandoned, and were the Frenchmen to creep off by twos and threes leaving the Peorias to be eaten by the Iroquois?

Presently those who watched the fort saw another party start out. This time there were five men in the canoe — Father Ribourde, Boisrondet, L'Espérance, and two others, Petit-Bled and Boisdardenne. After their departure a strange commotion arose within the walls of the fort. Ship carpenters ran here and there plundering the cabins: they tore down the doors, and pillaged and robbed on every hand. They even overturned the effects in the lodgings of the priests. Hillaret and the brawny blacksmith forced open the storehouse and brought out powder and balls and arms, and furs and merchandise. From every corner of the fortress La Roze and Le Blanc and their fellow-conspirators gathered things of value. Then, loaded down with guns and beaver skins and fine linen and moccasins, they made for the riverside. One man with a sharp instrument scratched on the gleaming white timbers of the half-built ship the words, "Nous sommes tous Sauvages" — "We are all savages" — and the date: "Ce 15 A —— 1680." Then off into the woods they vanished, leaving the fort wrecked and plundered.

Meantime night had come upon the aged friar and his four companions on their way to Tonty at the upper village. Petit-Bled and

Boisdardenne, in league with the conspirators at the fort, rose up and spiked the guns of L'Espérance and Boisrondet, and made off with the canoe after their fellows, leaving the Recollet and the two young men to find their way on foot and without means of defense to the village of the Kaskaskias.

Tonty heard the news of the mutiny with consternation and anger, and hastened back to the ruined fort. Everything of value seemed to have been taken, except the forge and some tools and arms too heavy for the deserters to carry on their flight. With this freight the heavy-hearted Tonty made his way back to the Kaskaskia village, where the lodges were once more filled by the returning warriors and hunters. After sending, by two routes, messengers to tell La Salle of the catastrophe, Tonty prepared for a new order of life. The fort and its garrison no longer gave him protection; but the Man with the Iron Hand was no coward. With his fragment of a band he entered the village and asked the Kaskaskias if he might live in their midst. They welcomed him to their kettles and their cabins, and shared with him and his men their food and their buffalo robes. The band of thirty or more that had come into the valley a few months before was now reduced to six—Tonty and his friend Boisrondet, the two young men, L'Espérance and Renault the Parisian, and the two friars — Father Membré having come up from the lower village.

XII

THE DEATH OF CHASSAGOAC

THE summer of 1680 was an unquiet season, when every whisper of the wind seemed to bring ill news. Persistent rumors came to the Illinois of an alliance between the Iroquois and the Miamis. Seeing their fears the energetic man with the "medicine" arm began to teach his red brothers the arts of the white man: he showed them the use of guns and taught them how to fight as the white men fought.

One day a runner came into the village with news of the death of La Salle, followed a little later by another Indian who confirmed the evil tidings. The Illinois saw gloom in the face of Tonty; but his eyes flashed no less of fire and his step lacked none of its usual vigor, for he was every inch a chief. Then into the village a new rumor came whispering to the Indians that this dark-visaged chieftain with flowing hair was no Frenchman at all; that he came from a country far beyond France whose people bore no kinship or allegiance to the great King of the French.

Surely the situation looked worse for the Illinois with each passing day. If the white men were in league with the Iroquois, and if their kinsmen, the Miamis, had joined the enemy, they and their wives and children might well fear the time when the war cry of the painted Iroquois would echo in the valley of the Illinois. Defeated and overwhelmed, they would be eaten by their enemies. Did not the tribes of the Five Nations thus treat their captives? Consternation rose on the wings of fear. What hope had the Illinois against the tribes from the East?

From their long houses at the other end of the Great Lakes the famous Iroquois warriors had spread desolation among a hundred tribes. They had conquered and subjugated whole nations. Toward the south as far as the Cherokees and Catawbas they had made easy conquests. North of the Iroquois were the French on the St. Lawrence. Since Champlain had taken sides with the Canadian Indians against the Iroquois, three quarters of a century ago, the tribes of the Five Nations had hated the

French. But they did not dare attack them. So now the West offered the best field for their eager ravages. From the Dutch in New Netherland, and later from their English successors, they had purchased guns and ammunition, and they had set their cruel hearts upon laying waste the valley of the Illinois — at least so the tribes of the West had heard and believed.

The Illinois had fought off the Iroquois before. Could they do it again? Their own warriors were experts with bows and arrows, and some of them had guns now; but the Iroquois warriors had every man his gun, and also his shield to ward off the feeble arrows of Western tribes. By their attacks other tribes had been almost exterminated, and their captives burned by slow fires with inconceivable tortures. What better chance had the Illinois, particularly if the treacherous Miamis joined the foe and the white men also proved to be enemies? So they watched Tonty narrowly; but the dark-eyed chief, with his forge and his tools, his restless stride, and his proud bearing, lived among them, and heeded not their anxious or suspicious looks.

The year seemed truly a calamitous one for the Indians. It was in those trying days that some Illinois were gathered in one of the long-roofed lodges, where on a bed made soft by the skins of buffalo lay a man close unto death. About him stood the men upon whom the nation relied to heal the sick and cure the wounded, to drive away the evil spirits, and to conjure the good spirits — the mysterious medicine men. They had worked long with the man who lay upon the bed, for he was a chief great in the councils of the Illinois nation.

A skillful hunter, a brave warrior, the greatest chief of the Illinois, Chassagoac lay dying. Five years ago he had known Father Marquette, and now just a little while ago he had been baptized by one of the gray-robed friars who belonged to the band of his friend La Salle. But as his death came on, it was to his own people that he turned. The manitou of the French was so far away, while the medicine men of his tribe were so near. So they gathered about him with their dances and their incantations; they made passes over his body and muttered strange words; they lifted their eyes and their voices toward the four winds of the heavens; and they waved rattles in a vain effort to appease the spirit that sought to rob them of their chief. It was useless. Chassagoac had looked about him for the last time. For a moment it was quiet in the lodge. Then a long despairing wail rent the air; and outside among the lodges every man and woman and child knew that the spirit of the great Chassagoac had gone out of him forever.

XIII

THE IROQUOIS COME

THE level stretch of land along the north bank of the Illinois River, where lay the lodges of the Kaskaskias, swarmed with hundreds of Indian braves who were eager to be off into the woods and across the plains. What was so stupid as life among the lodges with the women and old men when the far-off wilds called them, when streams might carry their pirogues into lands where their enemies lay sleeping and unwatchful, when the trails to north and south and east and west might lead them into woods and fields where bountiful game would fall before their arrows? Why should the white chief make so serious objection? Other bands had set off some days before in spite of his protests.

No one had seen signs of the Iroquois, and the alarm raised so often began to lose its terror. Besides, was Tonty such a good prophet after all? He had told them that La Salle would return by the end of May, and now May had long been gone and sure tidings had come that La Salle was dead.

It was not yet fall. Across the river the leaves of the trees, still fresh and green, were turning and rippling in the winds. Even the sound of their whispering said to the Indians: "Soon we will be dropping off and the frosts will come. Hunting is good. Come away into the woods." And they went.

September found not half the warriors left in the village; but Tonty and his three young men were still there. The two gray-robed Recollets — one short and sturdy and young, and the other who had seen the seasons change as often as the old men in the village — withdrew to a cabin in the midst of a field some distance from the town. La Salle had not come back; nor had the round-faced priest, who strutted so pompously down to the water's edge in February and paddled off with Ako and the Picard toward the sunset.

The Indians hoped Tonty would continue to stay with them. More than four months he had lived in their midst, and now it was twice that time since he had first come into their valley. He dealt with them honestly and without fear, and he had taught them many new ways. The Illinois were archers whose fame had spread throughout the length and breadth of the valley of the Mississippi; but Tonty had shown them how to use the guns that spat fire and dropped a foe while the bow was bending — the guns that made the Iroquois so dreaded.

In spite of privation and discouragement, desertions and loss of friends, Tonty gave no sign that he had lost heart. If only the Indians could hear again the reassuring words of the lamented Chassagoac and forget the warnings of his still suspicious brother, Nicanopé, they could learn to trust the French and to love this white leader like a brother.

Once Tonty had set off in a canoe to see if he could learn at the settlement at Mackinac some news of his chief who all people said was dead. The Indians protested against his departure, but in vain. He did not go far, however, for the river was at that time so low that he ran upon shoals and was obliged to return to the village.

Toward the middle of September came the hoped-for rains, and one day Tonty and his men drew their canoe out of the water, turned it upside down, and began to renew its coat of gum ready for another trial of the river. Some of the Indians watched him as he worked with his curious left-handed movements. Others were too busy entertaining a friendly Shawnee who was paying a visit to the village. As night came on, the Shawnee departed, making his way toward the south and west. The rounded roofs of the village caught the arrows shot by the setting sun and then sank into dusk. Under each roof Indian men stretched out upon buffalo hides and lost themselves in dreams. The women arranged the lodges for the night and then lay down beside brown little papooses whose round eyes had long been closed. So the quiet night settled down upon the village. Three times would the oaks along the river sow their leaves to the winds of winter before another such peaceful night would come upon the village and its people.

The next day Indians of the village saw the Shawnee come hurrying back, cross the river, and rush hot-foot into the town. "The Iroquois!" he panted to the excited chiefs. Two leagues off to the southwest, on the banks of the Aramoni, a tributary of the Illinois River, he had discovered an army of five or six hundred

Iroquois coming to attack the village. Turmoil fell upon the Kaskaskias. Where were their warriors? More than half of them were scattered to the four quarters of the valley. Only four or five hundred remained. And where were the guns which Tonty had so carefully trained them to use? Gone for the most part with the absent warriors. Only a few were left, with ammunition for three or four shots apiece. The rest of the braves had only bows and arrows and war clubs. Tonty had been right, but it was no time now to lament.

A reconnoitring party sent out to spy upon the enemy soon came back in great excitement. About five hundred Iroquois were encamped along the Aramoni. They had guns and pistols and sabers. Most of them had shields of wood or of leather, and some wore wooden breastplates. And with the Iroquois were a hundred Miamis, armed with bows and arrows. The anger of the Illinois rose with their fear. The Miamis, their neighbors and kin, should smart for this afterward. But the spying party had still further news to tell. Among the moving figures of the enemy they had seen one arrayed in a black robe and a Jesuit's cowl. Calmer eyes would have seen that it was only an Iroquois chief decked out in a black coat and hat. But the heated imagination of the scouts saw a French priest; while in another figure they made sure they saw La Salle himself.

If the village had been in a turmoil before, now it was in a fury. Their worst fears, then, had come true: the French were all traitors. Even Tonty had deceived them and had his own reasons for trying to get out of the village before the Iroquois came. Like angry bees the Indians swarmed to the lodge of Tonty. "Now," said one of their chiefs, "we know you for a friend of the Iroquois. The winds of rumor have told us no lies. We are lost, for the enemy are too many for us and you and the Frenchmen are their friends."

In the midst of the furious, gesticulating crowd of warriors Tonty stood calm. "I will show you that I am not a friend of the Iroquois," he replied. "If need be, I will die with you. I and my men will help you fight your battle."

Their anger turned to joy as they thought that with such a leader the good spirits might yet give them victory. There was much to do before the battle. With swift hands they gathered together a supply of corn; and when night came ghostly figures moved to and fro as they embarked the women and children in their long pirogues. Each wooden canoe would hold thirty or more, and there were hundreds to crowd the little fleet. With a guard of fifty or sixty men the boats slipped out, one after another, upon the dark waters. Noiseless paddles dipped in and out as the barks, filled with provisions and the closely huddled figures, shot down the stream. They passed the black mouth of the Aramoni, and after several hours came to a spot six leagues below the village. Here, in a place made almost inaccessible by the river on one side and a swamp on the other, they landed and set up camp.

In the Kaskaskia village there was no rest that night. The young braves were preparing for the battle of the morrow. By long rows of camp-fires, kettles were hung. Dogs were killed and cooked, for the occasion was one deserving of so great a ceremony. By turns they feasted and danced in the flickering light of the fires — weird dances, punctuated with howls and whoops. The flames of the camp-fires cast the shadows of the dancers across the open space and against the walls of the lodges like ghostly, ever-changing spirits; and into the night air rose chants, rhythmic and uncanny. All the long night through the Indians kept up their rites to work themselves into a proper spirit for the attack upon the Iroquois — a fight against odds wherein they needed the help of every manitou or spirit that could aid them.

Gradually the fires die out as in the east a faint light begins to spread. The day has come at last, the day which for years the Illinois have dreaded. They gather with fresh war paint and ready weapons — bows and arrows, heavy-headed clubs, or skull-crackers, and the few guns that are left. Tonty is there with two of his men. L'Espérance is to remain in the village to guard the papers of La Salle; and the two friars, ignorant of the excitement, are a league away in their retreat in the fields.

Together the warriors crowd to the river bank, Tonty and Boisrondet and Renault in the lead, with the naked and painted Indians howling and whooping about them. Their pirogues cross the stream in a trice. Through the strip of oaks, over the hill and out across the open meadow, the warriors, white and red, dash on to the conflict. They approach the ranks of the Iroquois, but halt in an open field in sight of the enemy.

Tonty will make a last effort at peace and is given a wampum necklace as a truce offering. Handing his gun to a friend, he walks across the intervening space attended by a single Illinois. The Indians watch him closely as he nears the foe. There is a sharp, deadly volley from the Iroquois. Tonty stops, and sending back the Indian who is with him, goes on alone. Arrow and ball fly about him, but he reaches the lines unscathed. Iroquois warriors swallow him from the view of the anxious Illinois. Only the Indian who has crossed half the open space with him sees the knife of an Iroquois flash out and bury itself in the side of the white chief. Then the staggering figure is lost even to his view. A moment later his hat is raised upon the end of a gun high above the heads of the foe.

With a cry of rage the whole force of the Illinois breaks again into a charge, furious to avenge such treachery. The young Boisrondet and Renault are in the lead, their hair flowing back in their speed, their set faces full of the lust of battle and revenge. The twisting, howling figures of five hundred Indians hurl themselves upon the ranks of the enemy. Then like fiends they fight. The report of the Iroquois guns is like the cracking of twigs in the forest to the new-found courage of the Illinois. Their war cries rise above it sharp and shrill. Swift arrows fly like driving hail. Heavy war clubs crash on Iroquois shield or on painted head and body. Even the vaunted Iroquois cannot hold against them. Their left side weakens, then yields, and gives back for half a league across the meadow.

Then goes up the sudden cry that Tonty is alive. Out of the press of battling foes he comes motioning them to hold. Gradually the din and the tumult cease. The Illinois withdraw and count their losses. Tonty reaches them, weak with the loss of blood from a gaping wound in his side, but he carries in his hand a wampum peace offering from the Iroquois.

XIV

THE SCATTERING OF THE TRIBES

Throughout the fight Tonty's life hung upon a thread. An impetuous Onondaga had stabbed him in the side, but fortunately the knife had glanced from a rib. Another Indian seized him by the hair; and a third raised his hat upon a gun. Then one of the chiefs recognized him as a white man and intervened. He was carried into the midst of the camp, where the chiefs gathered about him and heard his plea for peace. The Illinois, said Tonty, were just as much the friends of the governor of Canada as were the Iroquois. Why should the Iroquois make war upon them?

It was an unquiet parley. Behind Tonty stood an Indian warrior with ready knife; and now and then as they talked he wound his fingers in the white man's hair and raised his black locks as if to scalp him. Outside of the circle the fight went on. Then came the report that Iroquois men were killed and wounded and that the left side was yielding. Dismayed, the chiefs asked their white captive how many men were in the fight. Tonty, seeing a chance to prevent hostilities, replied that there were twelve hundred Illinois and that fifty Frenchmen were fighting with them. Overcome with consternation at these figures, the chiefs hastened to give Tonty the present of wampum and beg him to make peace for the Iroquois.

The Illinois with their wounded white leader and his two men turned back to the village. A league from home they came upon Father Membré hurrying out to meet them. The sound of guns had brought him from his cabin in the fields back of the town. They crossed the river together, and Tonty was glad enough to lie down in one of the lodges and let the priest and young men tend his wound.

Scarcely had the Illinois reached their lodges when, looking back, they saw little groups of Iroquois on the other side of the river. A few of these soon found means of crossing, and they hovered near the village in a pretense of seeking food. But the Illinois, who were not children in the art of Indian warfare, were well aware of the ways of the treacherous Iroquois, and they watched these straggling bands with gloomy foreboding.

By a magnificent sally the Illinois had daunted their enemy, and Tonty's exaggeration of their numbers had completed the impression of their power in the minds of the Iroquois. But the Illinois well knew that they were no match for the Iroquois with their abundance of arms and ammunition and their allies, the Miamis. Sooner or later the Iroquois would learn the true numbers of the villagers. Then the fierce warriors of the Five Nations would harry them until they found an opportunity to crush them out of existence. Massacres, tortures, and burnings could be their only possible end if they stayed in the village. After their warriors were slain, what of the women and children, anxiously waiting in the secluded refuge down the river?

Tonty and his men were probably safe, for the Iroquois had too much fear of the French in Canada to harm them without great provocation. But the Illinois were not safe. So they deserted their village, took to their pirogues, and passed downstream to join their wives and old men.

In their hearts the Indians saw the wisdom of flight, for they knew what had happened in the past. They did not forget the fate of other nations whom the Iroquois had practically exterminated. Would the invasion of the Illinois country have any other end? Yet it was with heavy and reluctant hearts that they gave up their lodges to the hated foe; and bands of warriors trailed back up the river for another look at their one-time home. Appearing on the hills a short distance behind the village they gazed down upon the ruined lodges which had been fired by the Iroquois, who had piled timber and half-burned posts in the form of a rude fort. In a lodge some distance away Tonty had been left still suffering from his wound and attended by his five men.

More and more of the Illinois gathered on the hill, until the array of warriors alarmed the Iroquois, who still nursed the belief that twelve hundred Illinois were haunting their rear. The Illinois continued their watch day by day and presently saw two men leave the town and climb the hill toward them. They soon distinguished the peculiar swing of their friend Tonty. With him was an Iroquois Indian. Joy-fully they welcomed him and listened to his message. The Iroquois wished to make a treaty of peace and had sent one of their men as a hostage.

The Illinois in turn sent back with Tonty one of their own young men, and negotiations were soon begun. But the peacemaker had been badly chosen, for the young Indian, eager for a treaty of peace, promised everything and finally revealed to the Iroquois the true number of the Illinois warriors. The Iroquois said little to the Illinois messenger, but sent him back to his people that night to tell the chiefs to come next day within half a league of the fort and conclude the peace. Then they turned on Tonty with wrath and reproaches for having deceived them.

The next day at noon Illinois and Iroquois met not far from the village. The Iroquois, hiding their true plans, gave presents to their late opponents and bound themselves to a firm and lasting peace. But Tonty, who was not misled, managed to send Father Membré to the Illinois to tell them that the peace was only a pretense, that the Iroquois were making elm-bark canoes, and that if the Illinois did not flee at once they would be followed and their whole tribe massacred.

At night the Iroquois called Tonty and Father Membré into the rude fort, and having seated the white leader they laid before him presents consisting of six bundles of valuable beaver skins. By the first two presents the Iroquois meant to inform Governor Frontenac that they would not eat his children and that he should not be angry at what they had done. The third bundle of skins was to be a plaster for the white man's wound. The fourth represented oil to be rubbed on the white men's limbs because of the long journeys they had taken. With the fifth they told Tonty how bright the sun was; and with the sixth they said that he should profit by it and return the next day to the French settlements.

"When are you going to leave the Illinois country?" asked the dauntless white man.

"Not until we have eaten these Illinois," replied the angered chiefs.

With a quick motion of his foot Tonty kicked the beaver skins from him — an unpardonable offense among Indians. Angry looks and gesticulations from the Indians greeted this act, but they hesitated to lay hands upon Tonty for he was a friend of Frontenac, the powerful governor of New France. Perhaps, too, they realized, better even than did the Illinois, the power of his heavy right hand, for he had lived in the land of the Iroquois before he had come out into these Western wilds.

Scarcely restraining themselves, they drove the two men from the fort. Tonty and the friar returned to their comrades at their lodge. No longer was their presence in the Iroquois camp useful to the Illinois or safe for themselves. Hardly expecting to see the dawn, they passed the night on guard resolved to sell their lives as dearly as possible. But they were not molested, and when day came they embarked for the far-off settlements. They were the last white men to leave the valley of the Illinois where carnage and woe were to reign.

The journey of Tonty and his companions was a difficult one, and calamity met them early on the way. After some five hours' paddling, they stopped to mend their canoe. The old friar Ribourde went off in the woods a little distance to pray, and was set upon and murdered by a roving band of Kickapoos. After searching for him in vain, the rest of his party went on. By short journeys they reached the Lake of the Illinois and turned northward. Winter overtook them; their food gave out; and they fell to eating acorns and grubbing up roots from beneath the snow. When their moccasins wore out, — for most of their travel was now by land, — they made themselves shoes out of a cloak which the murdered friar had left behind. Weeks passed by as they journeyed on. They came now and then upon deserted Indian camps, and, desperate with hunger, they tried to eat the leather thongs which bound together the poles of the Indian lodges. They even chewed the tough rawhide of an old Indian shield which they had found. Tonty was sick almost constantly with fever and scarcely able to walk. Not until December did the party of five men reach Green Bay, where at last they were given a warm welcome by the Indians and some Frenchmen in a Pottawattomie village.

Back in the valley of the Illinois, after the departure of the little group of French from the village, all pretense at peace was cast aside, and Iroquois fury turned itself loose. The Illinois had gone, leaving them only a deserted village, on which they wreaked their vengeance. Having destroyed the lodges by fire, they dug up the caches of corn and burned and scattered the contents. Then they moved on to the village graveyard and tore down from the scaffolds the bodies that had been left there for a time before burial. From the graves of the village they dug up the long-buried relatives of the departed inhabitants, and scattered the bones in every direction. Out of pure fiendishness they despoiled this most sacred spot in the Indian town. On the half-burned poles of the lodges they hung skulls for the crows to pick. Then they followed the fleeing Illinois down the river.

The Illinois gathered again at the place where their women and children had taken refuge. It was a long narrow bit of land on the north bank of the river. Between it and solid ground was a heavy, muddy swamp across which only a four-foot path of firm ground was to be found. On this semi-island, half a league in length and but fifteen or twenty paces wide, the women had built temporary lodges. Only from the water side could attack be made, and here they piled up their pirogues in the form of a wall.

The Iroquois, following close after, camped on the shore directly across the river, where over a hundred huts were soon erected. On the bark of near-by trees they cut the savage story of the raid, and traced rude pictures of the chiefs and the number of warriors that each chief led out. Five hundred and eighty-two braves were thus recorded. On one tree a diagram was traced showing the scalps of the Illinois who had been killed and the number of captives who had been taken; while on their own record of warriors were figures represented as pierced with gunshot or wounded with arrows.

The Illinois, terrified by the pursuit of their enemy, crossed the narrow path to the mainland and took up their journey downstream. At night they again camped beside the river; and soon the fires of the Iroquois camp shot up from the other shore. Another day's march, and again two camps appeared at night on opposite banks. The Iroquois, who did not yet dare to make an attack, hung on the flanks of the Illinois like a pack of cowardly wolves.

The Illinois traveled slowly, for they were greatly impeded by the women and children and old men, and food must be gathered by the way. But just as slowly and deliberately followed the Iroquois. Occasionally they tried to put the Illinois off their guard by offerings of peace; but the Illinois were wary. The two armies, marching side by side with only the river between, passed Peoria Lake, and the men of the Peoria village crossed over and joined their brethren. When the Iroquois came to the deserted ruins of Fort Crèvecœur below the village, they stopped long enough to pull the nails out of the timbers of the skeleton of the boat by the water's edge.

Day after day the Illinois and Iroquois walked beside the river. Night after night camp-fires faced each other across the waters. On the way the Illinois had gathered many of their tribes together. The Peorias, the Cahokias, the Moingwenas, the Tamaroas, and several minor tribes had joined the moving army like parts of a rolling snowball. If only they were armed with guns and free from their wives and children, they might strike a blow that the Iroquois would long remember. But wiser counsels prevented such a move.

It became more and more difficult to find food for so many; and as they neared the Mississippi River they longed to separate and go off each tribe to its own hunting-ground. They held a parley with the enemy across the river, and a truce was declared. Then the Illinois tribes separated. The Moingwenas with several of the smaller tribes went down the Mississippi; the Peorias crossed to the western side; while the Kaskaskias and Cahokias preferred to go up the river toward the land of the Sioux. But the Tamaroas, most luckless of all, lingered near the mouth of the Illinois River. It was the opportunity for which the Iroquois had waited, for their long-time policy had been to "divide and conquer." Such had been their plan when they came into the valley, separating the Miamis from the Illinois and falling upon the latter.

As soon as the other tribes were out of the way, the Iroquois attacked the Tamaroas. That feeble tribe fled in terror. Some of the men escaped, while the rest were massacred. Along the margin of the Illinois, not far from its mouth, was an open meadow; and here were enacted scenes such as had long made the Iroquois hated and feared. The captives were put to horrible torments: some were roasted to death, some skinned alive. The nerves and sinews of some were torn out; and when their tortures had done their work, the heads and even whole bodies of women and children were placed upon upright poles and upon stakes driven into the ground.

XV

A SIOUX WAR PARTY

A LITTLE more than seven months before the Iroquois drove the Illinois tribes out of their river valley, a band of Tamaroas were paddling in wooden dugouts upon the Illinois River not far from the place where later occurred the massacre of so many of their tribes. It was early in March, and throughout the land parties of Indians of every tribe were still roaming about on their winter hunt. That they should meet other wanderers along the streams and trails was therefore not surprising. This day they chanced upon a single canoe coming down the river. It was not one of the wooden pirogues so common among their tribes, but a small canoe of birch bark, and in it were three white men. Two of them were bearded and brown with wind and weather; while the third was smooth of face and large of frame, and was clothed in a long gray robe.

The Tamaroas had seen few white men, but like most of the tribes of the Upper Mississippi

Valley they had heard of the French fort near the village of their brother tribe, the Peorias; and they had a keen desire to have the whites settle near their own town and bring them presents of iron weapons and bright-colored pieces of cloth. So now they stopped the canoe and begged the three men to come home with them and pay a visit to the village of their tribe on the western shore of the Mississippi a little way below the mouth of the Illinois.

One of the bearded voyagers, Michael Ako, answered with an excuse, the big gray friar nodding pompous approval as the canoe slipped on downstream. Although the time of their parley was brief, the Indians had observed that the canoe of the whites was loaded not only with provisions, but with furs and merchandise, and, most important of all, with guns and powder and ball. They were going, not down the Mississippi to the village of the Tamaroas and their southern neighbors, but up the Great River to the land of the Sioux, their enemies.

Quickly the Tamaroas resolved that the Sioux warriors should never lay hands on the white men's guns. Already, armed only with arrows and clubs, they were a foe to be held in no light esteem. As countless as the trees in the woods and swift enough in their bark canoes to far outstrip the clumsy Illinois pirogues, what could the Northern braves not do with guns? There was still a chance to prevent such a catastrophe.

The Tamaroas could not overtake on the water the swift-paddling white men. They tried it and the men in the canoe only laughed at them. But there was a place downstream quickly reached on foot and well fitted for an ambuscade. The fleet young Tamaroas braves darted across country and were soon lying in wait on a narrow point jutting out into the river. Unfortunately, however, for the plans of the Tamaroas, they were not careful enough with their camp-fire, and the white men, seeing the smoke, stole quietly by near the opposite shore. And so the little bark canoe continued its way to the mouth of the Illinois River; and before the end of the month its occupants, the friar Hennepin and his two companions, were well on their way up the Mississippi.

While they were pushing their bark with difficulty against the current of this strange new stream, there was great excitement in the

Sioux villages toward which they were journeying. Parties of Indians had gathered in the war dance, and painted savages, stripped and ready for battle, were leaving the towns of the Sioux for the south. They soon reached the waters of the great river not far from the Falls of St. Anthony, and from this point thirty-three bark canoes, manned by more than a hundred men, swept swiftly downstream. The Sioux were embarked upon a war against the Miamis and the Illinois; and bitter with the desire for revenge was their leader, the old chief Aquipaguetin, for it was not long since that the Miamis had killed one of his sons.

They had not traveled many days when, early one April afternoon, Aquipaguetin and his Sioux warriors, skimming swiftly over the waters, saw on the bank ahead of them three strange men. One of them, long of body and long of robe, was busily gumming a bark canoe which lay upon the shore. The other two men were engaged in boiling some meat in a kettle over a camp-fire. The three men looked up and saw the swarm of Indians coming down upon them. Hastily they threw away the fowl they were cooking, tossed the canoe into the water, jumped to their places, and began to paddle upstream to meet the Sioux braves.

Here was adventure already for the eager Sioux. The young braves drew back their bows, and arrows sped through the air. While they were still some distance off, they could hear the men calling out to them in words of a strange tongue. At last the older men, having caught sight of the upraised calumet of peace, held back the young braves with their too impetuous weapons.

In a few moments the Sioux had reached the canoe of the white men. Some of the Indians leaped into the water and some on shore, completely surrounding the three strangers. Quickly the canoes all came to land, and Aquipaguetin and his fellow-chiefs made the prisoners sit down upon skins on the river bank. They were Frenchmen — two bearded traders and a big gray-robed friar — and around them in circles the Indians sat. True, the Sioux had seized the pipe of peace; but they would not smoke it, for they were not yet ready for peace. Michael Ako understood the significance of this conduct and was troubled.

Ordinarily Father Hennepin might have been glad to omit the smoking ceremony, for ever since his boyhood he had detested tobacco smoke. As a young Recollet friar he had many years before been sent to the seacoast town of Calais, where he heard the stories of sailors just home from the seas. Indeed, so keen was his desire to hear accounts of travel and bold deeds that he would hide himself behind the doors of taverns, where the sailors came to smoke and drink, listening (in spite of the odor of tobacco which made him sick) to the tales of their voyages. But now, disagreeable as was the smoke of tobacco, he no doubt would have gladly drawn deep upon the pipe of peace if only he could see these Sioux put the calumet to their lips and thus banish the fear of an ever-ready tomahawk.

"The Miamis! The Miamis! Where are they?" cried the Sioux in words which even Ako, the man learned in Indian tongues, did not understand at first. At length he caught their meaning; and with a paddle he drew on the sand a diagram to show that the Miamis had moved over to the land of the Illinois and were out of reach of the Sioux warriors. This was bitter news to the war party. Three or four of the old men laid their hands upon the heads of the white men and burst into weeping and lamentations. Then with loud cries they leaped into their canoes, forced their captives to take up their paddles, and crossed the river to another landing-place. Here they held a council as to what they should do with the prisoners.

The Sioux party decided to give up their expedition against the Miamis, but the disappointed Aquipaguetin seemed bent upon the killing of the whites. Two of the chiefs went to inform the captives by signs that they were to be tomahawked. The white men replied by heaping axes, knives, and tobacco at the feet of the crafty leader of the Indians, and, satisfied with the ransom, he said no more for a while of slaughter.

That night the Indians gave back to the white men their calumet, still unsmoked. The captives divided the hours into three watches lest they be massacred in their sleep. Hennepin was resolved to let himself be killed without resistance, all for the glory of his faith; but Ako and the Picard slept with their weapons close to their hands.

XVI

THE LAND OF THE SIOUX

When morning came, Narrhetoba, one of the chiefs of the Sioux, appeared before the white men, asked for their calumet, filled it with his own tobacco, and smoked it in their presence. Henceforth he was their friend, despite the wiles of the old chief Aquipaguetin. Taking to their canoes that day, the party with the three white captives paddled upstream toward the home of the Sioux.

Each day at dawn an old man roused the braves with a cry, and before taking up the day's paddling they scoured the neighborhood for enemies. For nearly three weeks they were on the way before they drew near to the Falls of St. Anthony. Time and again the old chief, mourning over his son's unavenged death, threatened to kill the whites; then with covetous fingers he would gather up the gifts with which he made them buy their lives. Carrying with him constantly the bones of a dead friend, wrapped in skins decorated with the quills of porcupines, he would often lay this bundle before the captives and demand that they cover the bones with presents in honor of the dead.

As they journeyed the old chief would at times break out into a fierce temper and vow the destruction of the three strangers. But on such occasions he would be restrained by the other chiefs, who realized that if they killed these white men no more traders would come to the Sioux country bringing merchandise and guns — which they spoke of as "the iron possessed by an evil spirit."

The Sioux watched the curious ways of Friar Hennepin, and when they saw him looking upon an open book and moving his lips in muttered words they were almost on the point of killing him — for surely he was a sorcerer conversing under his breath with an evil spirit that might be persuaded any moment to kill them all. Ako and the Picard, seeing the effect of the friar's devotions, urged him to leave off such dangerous practices. But the stubborn Hennepin, instead of muttering his holy offices, now fell to singing from the book in a loud and cheerful voice, much to the relief of the Indians who feared this far less than the mumbled undertones.

At last they left the river not far from the Falls of St. Anthony and hurried away northward toward the villages that lay in the region of the broad Mille Lac, the long-limbed Sioux covering the ground with great speed. They waded streams covered by a coat of ice from the frost of the night before. Neither Ako nor the Picard could swim, and so they often passed over on the backs of the Sioux. Hennepin was not built for speed, and the Indians, impatient at his slow progress, set fire to the prairie behind him and then, taking his hands, hurried the frightened man of prayer ahead of the licking flames. When they came to the first village the war party finally separated, each Sioux going to his own home town.

The poor Picard, unable to conceal his growing fears, had roused the quick contempt of the Sioux, who seized him with no gentle hands, for they saw in him a coward deserving of no such respect as they willingly bestowed upon his sterner friend Ako. He should be treated like an ordinary Indian captive. So they painted his head and face with different colors, fastened a tuft of feathers in his hair, placed in his hand a gourd filled with small round stones, and made him sing shaking his rattle in the air to keep time to the music.

Yet like the tribes of the Illinois Valley, the Sioux were a hospitable people. They fed the white men with fish and with wild rice, seasoned with blueberries, and served upon dishes made of birch bark. Then they proceeded to divide among themselves such supplies as still remained in the hands of the white men. Three chieftains, moreover, living in as many villages, adopted the three prisoners and carried them off to their homes. Perhaps Ako was not sorry to part with the friar, for the boastful ways of Hennepin had sorely tried his patience.

It was the old chief Aquipaguetin who adopted Hennepin into his own family to take the place of the son he had lost. He gave the friar a great robe of ten beaver skins, trimmed with porcupine quills, and bade his half-dozen Indian wives treat him as a chieftain's son. And when he observed how fatigued Hennepin was after the long journey, the chief ordered that a sweat-bath be prepared for him.

A sweat-house was set up, covered tightly with buffalo skins. Through a small opening, which was closed behind them, Hennepin and four braves entered, stripped to the skin. In the middle of this house, red-hot stones had been placed, and these, now sprinkled with water, gave off clouds of steam. As the perspiration poured from the men's bodies the four Indians laid their hands upon the friar and rubbed him briskly; and when he was on the point of fainting with weakness he was carried out of the sweat-house and covered again with his robe. Three times a week the friar was given this sweat-bath, which he said made him as well as ever.

Hennepin and many of his belongings were a mystery to the Sioux Indians. His shaven head and face aroused their admiration, and so they put him to work shaving the heads of the young boys. He also bled the sick, and the strange medicines he carried about with him performed many a useful purpose among the ailing Sioux. He had brought with him an iron pot with three feet moulded in the shape of lion paws. This the Sioux dared not touch, unless they first wrapped their hands in a buffalo or deer skin. Not daring to keep it in the tepees or lodges, the women with great fear in their hearts hung it up outside on the limb of a tree.

In two other towns of the Sioux lived Ako and the Picard in primitive Indian fashion. The villagers found Ako a man after their own hearts, for he had lived with Indians, enjoyed their wild life, and knew their ways as did few white men. Gradually he learned the language of the Sioux, as he had learned the tongues of other tribes who dwelt in the river valleys to the south and east.

In their home country which stretched west and north for many a league, the Sioux tribes lived for the most part in groups of tepees — lodges far different from the rounded houses of the Illinois. In building the tepee, which was small and conical in shape, the squaws first planted about twenty poles in a circle and then bound them together near the top with a stout leather thong. This framework was covered with buffalo hides, sewed tightly together into one piece with a flap for an entrance which was always toward the east. From the fire in the center of the tepee the smoke rose and passed out of a hole where the poles were joined at the top. Some of the Sioux, however, lived in so-called bark lodges, which were made with a ridgepole and roofed with the bark of the elm tree.

The spring months of 1680, as they grew warmer and ran into summer, found the Sioux braves in the villages near Mille Lac eagerly looking forward to a buffalo hunt. Aquipaguetin urged his foster son to join the party in a long trip to the southwest. But Hennepin wanted now to get back to civilization, for he had found little success in his ministry. So he asked permission to make a journey down to the mouth of the Wisconsin, where he said La Salle had promised to send men with supplies and merchandise. After some discussion the Sioux bade him do as he wished and take the Picard with him. Accordingly when the buffalo hunters gathered together from the various villages, the Picard once more joined his friend the friar. Ako, on the other hand, not loath to see them go, cast his lot in with the hunters.

With Ouasicoudé, or the Pierced Pine, the greatest chief of all the Sioux, as their leader, the hunting party followed the stream now known as the Rum River until it fell into the Mississippi a few leagues above the Falls of St.

Anthony. Here the women of the party halted to commence work on birch-bark canoes. While awaiting the arrival of those who had gone to collect long strips of bark, the women set up frames or little docks of poles upon which to build the canoes. The buffalo hunters, having first sent a few of their number down to the Falls to offer a sacrifice to the spirit of the water, set off on their trip with Ako in their midst; and Friar Hennepin and the Picard started down the Mississippi alone in their canoe, hoping to reach the band of whites at the mouth of the Wisconsin.

XVII

A BUFFALO HUNT

Into a tree that stood beside the Falls of St. Anthony, a devout Sioux climbed, weeping and lamenting bitterly as he fastened to the branches a fine beaver skin. On the inside the skin had been carefully dressed and painted white, and it was decorated with the quills of a porcupine. And while he offered this sacrifice to the spirit of the Falls, he cried out in a loud voice: —

"Thou who art a spirit, grant that our nation may pass here quietly without accident, may kill buffalo in abundance, conquer our enemies and bring in slaves, some of whom we will put to death before thee. The Foxes have killed our kindred. Grant that we may avenge them."

Unk-ta-he, the god who dwelt under the Falls of St. Anthony, must have heard his prayer, for all that he asked was granted. Many buffalo fell to the lot of the hunters, and later in the season they attacked the nation of Foxes and great was their victory. They brought their captives home to offer to the spirit that had given them such glorious success.

On this early July day Hennepin and the timid Picard, looking up as they made the portage around the Falls, saw the Sioux presenting his ornamented robe and heard him offer up his prayer. Then they pushed their canoe into the water and took up their journey upon the stream that shot out so swiftly from the foot of the Falls. The Sioux climbed down out of the tree and joined his friends on their hunt along the river and out over the plains.

The crafty Aquipaguetin was with them, and as the days went by he kept thinking of the story Hennepin had told him of other white men sent out by La Salle with merchandise and arms to the mouth of the Wisconsin. Why should he not meet these men himself and receive their first lavish presents? Finally he could no longer restrain himself, and taking with him about ten men he paddled down the river after Hennepin and the Picard. The two white men had had many adventures. In their hunting they had not been fortunate, and many times they had come near to starvation. Once they had passed two days without food, when they came upon some buffalo crossing the river. The Picard managed to shoot one of the cows in the head. The animal being too heavy to haul ashore, they cut it into pieces in the water. Then they feasted so heartily that for several days they were too sick to resume the journey.

Hennepin and the Picard were yet some distance above the Wisconsin when Aquipaguetin overtook them. He did not stop long, but dipped paddle once more and soon reached the mouth of the river where Marquette, seven years before, had first seen the Mississippi. There he halted and looked about for signs of white men. No camp was beside the river, nor did any smoke rise as far as his eye could reach. Having searched in vain he at length turned northward with great wrath to seek out his foster son.

The Picard had gone off to hunt and the friar was alone under a shelter they had set up to protect them from the sun. Glancing up he saw his foster father coming toward him, club in hand. In terror of his life, he reached for a pair of the Picard's pistols and a knife. Perhaps the friar, armed with these unholy weapons, daunted the chief, for he contented himself with showering upon his adopted son maledictions for camping on the wrong side of the river and thus exposing himself rashly to the enemy. Then he pushed on to rejoin his fellow-Sioux.

The party of hunters had now turned south, and in a few days they came upon Hennepin and the Picard, who joined them on the trail of big game. Many leagues down the Mississippi they hunted for buffalo, and altogether they captured a hundred and twenty of the shaggy beasts. While on the chase it was their practice to post old men on high points of the cliffs and neighboring hills to keep watch for enemies. One day Hennepin was busy with a sharp knife trying to cut a long thorn out of an Indian's foot when an alarm was given in the camp. Two hundred bowmen sprang to their arms and ran in the direction of the alarm. Not to be left out of the fighting, the Indian with the wounded foot jumped up likewise and ran off as fast as any of them. The women started a mournful song, which they kept up until the men returned to say that it was not an enemy, but a herd of nearly a hundred stags.

A few days later the men from their high posts announced that there were two warriors in the distance. Again the young braves ran out only to find two Sioux women who had come to tell the chiefs that a party of Sioux, hunting near the end of Lake Superior, had found five other white men who were coming south to learn more about the three whites with Ouasicoudé's band.

Returning from their hunt some days later, they met these five new white men. Their leader was the Sieur Du Luth, a famous hunter and explorer who had come into the upper end of the Mississippi Valley by way of Lake Superior, and with him were four French *coureurs de bois.* Du Luth was a cousin of Henry de Tonty, and with great eagerness did he hear from Ako and his friends the story of the band of whites who had settled at the Peoria village and of the fort they had built beside the Illinois River.

There were eight white men now in the band that journeyed northward toward the Sioux towns about the Lake. The Indians soon made up their minds that Du Luth was a man of power among the whites — more so, perhaps, than Ako, the leader of the first three visitors who had come into their country. But neither Ako nor Du Luth seemed to hold the gray-robed friar in the high esteem to which he thought himself entitled.

When they had arrived at the villages the Sioux gave a great feast to the palefaces, who had come into their country from the south and from the north, and for more than a month red men and white lived together in peace, each learning from the other. September drew near to a close, and as winter approached the white men grew anxious to return to their own kind. They secured the consent of Ouasicoudé, who with his own hand traced for them a map of the route they would need to take.

With this chart they embarked in two canoes upon the Rum River, and a few days later they had reached the Mississippi and were carrying their light craft around the Falls of St. Anthony. Here two of Du Luth's men, much to their leader's wrath, stole robes which were hanging in the trees as sacrifices to the spirit of the water. They stopped at the mouth of the Wisconsin to smoke the meat of some buffalo they had killed. While they were camped at this point, three Sioux came to tell them of something which had happened since they had left the northern villages. A party of Sioux, led by one of the chiefs, had plotted to follow after the eight white men and kill and plunder them. But Ouasicoudé, the Pierced Pine, the ever friendly chief, was so enraged that he went to the lodge of the chief of the conspirators and in the presence of his friends tomahawked him.

Thankful for their deliverance, the whites paddled their canoes up the Wisconsin River, crossed the portage to the Fox River, and followed that stream to Green Bay and its settlements of French priests and traders. Meantime back in the country they had left, the Sioux were waging fierce war with the Illinois and other nations of the South. Paessa, a Kaskaskia chief who had left the village of his people, in spite of Tonty's remonstrances, before the coming of the Iroquois, had led a party of Illinois braves into the fastnesses of the Upper Mississippi against their long-time foes.

In the valley of the Illinois and in the valleys of the rivers which flowed together to make the current of the mighty Mississippi, no white man was now to be found. When the first snows came, the tribes of the Upper Mississippi found themselves with a few guns and knives and bits of bright cloth and the memory of the white man's ways. But instead of the pale-faced Frenchmen, who came bearing presents and asking for peace, they now had with them, skulking through their valleys, the faithless Iroquois, with hands red with the blood of conquered nations and hearts seared with the flames with which they burned their captives.

XVIII

THE MIAMIS REPENT

The camp-fires of five hundred Iroquois glowed in the frosty night air, the smoke hovering above like a drifting cloud under the moon. Some of the five hundred lay sleeping, their weapons close to their hands, while others were standing guard against possible danger. Many weeks had passed since they had hounded the Illinois out of the valley of the river that bore their name, and now all up and down its length was quiet. No Illinois village along the shores sent the smoke of its lodge-fires upwards. No winter hunting party camped by the frozen stream. At the same time, though deserted by its ancient dwellers, the valley was not wanting signs of the thing which had caused their departure. The moon which that night hung over the returning Iroquois shone upon all the length of the river, revealing scenes for a hundred leagues that spoke as plainly of the Iroquois passing as does the track in fresh snow tell of the passing of a wolf.

The trail began at the great village of the Kaskaskias. Here the pale light fell upon the half-burned ruins of lodges, the scattered contents of the caches, the desecrated graveyard, and the wolves that with savage howls still hung about the town their human cousins had ravaged. Down the river went the trail marked by ashes of deserted camps, past the lodges of the Peorias, the ruined Fort Crèvecœur, and the ribs of the unfinished ship gleaming white in the moonlight. Then came the ashes of more camps, always facing each other as they followed the river down to the open meadow near the mouth where stood the grim figures of the tortured Tamaroas.

No, the trail of the Iroquois was not hard to trace in the Illinois Valley. Nor was it a difficult task for an Indian to find the route they had taken when, after massacring the Tamaroas, they had moved across country to the valley of the Ohio River many leagues to the southeast. The Iroquois warriors, proud of their victories and glorying in their cruel deeds, traveled with little fear. Laden with furs and plunder, with scores of Illinois slaves in their camp, they did not know that they were being followed. But they were. The Kaskaskia chief, Paessa, who had set out with a war band against the Sioux before the Iroquois raid, had now come back to the valley of his nation only to find ruins and the well-marked trail of the Iroquois.

There were only a hundred in the band, but in their desire for revenge they knew no such thing as numbers. With fury adding to their speed they started upon the track of the enemy and now night by night through the Ohio Valley their camp-fires were coming nearer to those of the Iroquois. The Iroquois were moving on toward home. Far to the east lay their villages of long houses in the land where the Ohio River had its northern source. They had scattered the Illinois and devastated their country. The weaker Miamis they had not harmed, perhaps because they had not yet found it to their advantage. But now they were entering the hunting-grounds of the Miamis who ranged from the Lake of the Illinois south as far as the Ohio.

They happened one day upon a party of Miami hunters and without hesitation the Iroquois fell upon them, killing some and adding others to the Illinois prisoners whom they were carrying home. The winter descended upon them with such vigor that they halted and built three forts at the corners of a triangle, each fort at two leagues distance from the others. Here the Miamis sent a delegation asking for the release of their captives. But they were mocked at by the vainglorious Iroquois. Then they offered a present of three thousand beaver skins as a ransom for their men. The overbearing conquerors, having attacked their own allies, now committed an unpardonable sin against Indian custom. They accepted the gift of the Miamis, but refused to release their captives. The Miamis sadly realized that they had deserted their neighbors, the Illinois, only to ally themselves to a band of traitors.

The winter did not halt the avenging party under Paessa. And one night the daring band slipped between two of the forts and pitched camp in the middle of the Iroquois triangle. At daybreak some in those forts should taste death for the outraged graveyard and for the trampled meadow where Tamaroas had died.

But that same night two Iroquois hunters saw their camp-fire and approached to see who they were. One of the two had entered the camp when a young and rash Illinois brave, unable to contain himself, leaped upon him and struck him dead. Quick as a flash the other was gone. Their secret was out. Surprise was now impossible and the band prepared for a terrific encounter. It came with the daylight. On every side the Iroquois bore down upon them. Outnumbered five to one, the brave Illinois held their ground all through the winter day. At evening both sides withdrew. A third of the dauntless hundred were dead, among them the gallant Paessa. Yet with the morning the unconquerable band again took up the fight. Three times they hurled themselves upon the enemy. At last, seeing the hopelessness of their battle, they drew away and cleared themselves from the hated triangle.

The news of these battles in the Ohio Valley passed quickly throughout the Miami tribes. The chiefs at the great village on the headwaters of the Kankakee, near the foot of the Lake of the Illinois, pondered over the situation in council with much concern. They had allied themselves with the Iroquois against the Illinois, and now their Iroquois allies had treacherously attacked them. In view of the indomitable courage which the Illinois had just displayed in the battle of the triangle, what would happen to the Miamis when the Iroquois were gone and the Illinois tribes came back to avenge themselves upon their neighbors?

They had other important things to think about as well. A few leagues north of their village, where the St. Joseph River emptied into the Lake, there had lain for many months the ruins of Fort Miami, built a year before by La Salle and demolished in April by the deserters from Fort Crèvecœur. But now Fort Miami was rebuilt; for out of the East La Salle had come again. Away back in July on distant Lake Ontario he had found some of the Fort Crèvecœur deserters, shot two who showed fight, and captured the rest. Then he had set out to the Illinois country to rescue Tonty; but it was November before he landed at the mouth of the St. Joseph River. On the day that his canoes touched shore, Tonty, sick and more than half-starved, was struggling northward along the west shore of the Lake, trying to reach the French settlements with the news of the Iroquois raid.

La Salle left some of his men to rebuild the fort and pushed on down the Kankakee, his anxiety for Tonty steadily increasing. At the Kaskaskia village he struck the trail the Iroquois had left behind them, and followed it down the river to the meadow of massacre near the mouth. Nowhere did he find trace of Tonty, and with heavy heart he came back to his men at Fort Miami. In his absence a band of New England Indians, mostly Abenakis and Mohegans, had pitched their lodges about the fort, and when La Salle appeared they joined themselves to his party and swore to follow him as their chief.

One important fact now stood out clearly in the mind of La Salle. If he was to accomplish anything in the exploration and settlement of the Mississippi Valley, he must bring the Miamis, the Illinois, the Shawnees, and other inhabitants of the Great Valley into such firm alliance with each other and with himself that they need have no fear from Iroquois or any other invaders. If he could get such an alliance started, he would feel free to make his long-delayed trip to the mouth of the Mississippi and open up trade by that means with France across the seas. With this in mind he took fifteen men and set out on the 1st of March to open communication with the Illinois, occasional bands of whom were beginning to wander back into their valley.

The men traveled easily over the snow with their snowshoes, but the glare of the sun was so intense that La Salle was stricken for several days with snow-blindness. While he lay suffering, unable to see or to sleep, some of his men came upon tracks which led them to the lodges of a hunting party of Fox Indians, from whom they learned to their great joy that Tonty was alive and had reached a village of Pottawattomies on Green Bay. They also learned that Ako and Hennepin and the Picard had returned safely to the settlements on the Lake.

Pressing on down the valley, not long afterwards, he met with a band of Illinois. They told him the story of the Iroquois raid and showed him letters from black-robed priests, which had been given them by the Iroquois. These letters seemed to be in the nature of passports safeguarding the Iroquois in case of their capture by the Illinois. The Illinois added that their enemies had other letters addressed to Father Allouez, and they interpreted the whole affair as meaning that the Black Gowns wished them to be attacked.

Now La Salle had for many years disliked the Jesuits, and he had accused them of trying to block his plans and wreck his enterprises. Especially did he hate the black-robed Father Allouez. The priest knew this, and it was the news of La Salle's coming that had caused him to slip out of the village of the Kaskaskias on that Christmas Eve of 1679. But now La Salle wished to quiet the fears of the Illinois, and so he assured them that their distrust of the black-robed priests was groundless. He told them of his plans to start a colony in the Illinois Valley and settle many French soldiers there to protect the tribes that made their homes along the river; and he urged them to make friends again with the Miamis and join forces with them against their common foe from the outside.

The Illinois were well pleased with the plans of La Salle, and they went off promising to carry his message to their people. La Salle sent a messenger to tell Tonty to wait for him at

Mackinac, and then returned to his fort on the St. Joseph. He had made a beginning with the Illinois; his next step was to bring the Miamis into an alliance.

In the Miami village south of his fort, during this time, there was much uncertainty. The Indians watched the white men's movements with anxiety and dreaded the wrath of the Illinois when they should return. Yet the Iroquois still seemed to hold them under a spell. Into the Miami village that spring came three Iroquois warriors, swaggering and boastful. But in spite of their treachery the Miamis dared not harm them. The visitors told of their feats of battle, derided the French, and urged the Miamis to continue the war against the Illinois.

But one fine spring day La Salle himself, with ten of the despised Frenchmen and a handful of New England Indians, entered the village. With curious eyes the Miamis watched the boastful Iroquois. Would they defy the French now? Upon the moment of La Salle's arrival, the three warriors made haste to visit him and pay him devout respect. But the white chief received them coldly, threatened them, and dared them to say in his presence what they had said before his coming. Abashed and silent they slunk away and fled from the village that night.

The Miamis had had their lesson — a lesson which they had been slow to learn. The discomfiture of the boasting Iroquois had broken the last tie that held them to their false friends of the Five Nations. They came together now in a grand council with La Salle in the lodge of the principal chief, and in order that all might hear they stripped the bark sides from the lodge and opened it up to the throng outside.

XIX

A CHIEF COME TO LIFE

When the Miamis had assembled in and about the open lodge of the chief, La Salle had one of the New England Indians bring into the council the presents which he wished to give. Then he chose first from the pile a roll of tobacco, and presenting it to the Miamis said: —

"May this tobacco, as you smoke it in your pipes, clear the mists from your minds, that you may think without confusion.

"And this," he said, laying down a piece of blue cloth, "is to cover the bodies of your relatives just killed by the Iroquois. May it turn your eyes from their dead forms to the peaceful blue sky where the sun shines so brightly.

"And here is a piece of red cloth to cover the earth so that you may see no longer the blood of your brethren. Its color is like that with which you paint your faces for a feast, and will mean to you that hereafter you will always live in pleasure and joy.

"Here are cloaks to cover the bodies of the loved ones you have lost. May they be a mark of our esteem and friendship. And take these fifty hatchets to help you raise a magnificent tomb in their memory. And those who have no beautiful ornaments to wear in the feast which you will give to those who are gone — let them wear these necklaces and bracelets, these rings and glass beads and little bells, and let them paint themselves with this paint."

Then he drew forth thirty sword blades and, stooping over, he planted them in a circle in the dirt floor of the lodge, around and inclosing the presents he had given.

"And so," he said, "will I make a palisade of iron about you so that the bodies of your dead friends may receive no harm."

He straightened himself beside the circle of iron, and while the Miamis within the lodge and outside watched him he continued: —

"Your dead friends must be contented now. We have paid them our reverence. They will only ask further that we let them lie in peace; that we wipe away our tears and take care of the loved ones who step into their places. But I wish to do more than this.

"I know how sadly you have mourned for

Ouabicolcata, your great chief who is dead. Think of him no longer as dead. His spirit and his soul have come to life once more in my body. I will raise his name among you. I am another Ouabicolcata, and I will take the same good care of his family as he did while he lived. No more am I Okimao as you used to call me. Henceforth my name is Ouabicolcata. Your chief lives again in the body of a Frenchman who is able to give you all the things which you need."

Seldom do Indians in council interrupt a speaker, but as the white leader promised to take up the name and life of their dead chief the whole gathering broke into cries of rejoicing and praise. When a son was lost from an Indian family the sorrowing parents often adopted in his place a captive from another nation. So now it did not seem strange that in place of their lamented chief they should take to their hearts and homes this white chief, and call him by the old name Ouabicolcata, and love him as they loved the man who was dead.

La Salle's men now brought three immense kettles. "In these," said the white chief, "you will make a great feast for the dead come to life." Then to his newly found relatives he presented shirts and cloaks, a box of knives and hatchets, and many other wonderful things saying: "See how I will give to my people the things they need."

"And now, my brothers," said La Salle, "we come to a matter of much consequence" — and he presented the Miamis with six guns. "There is a great master across the sea. He is famous everywhere. He loves peace. He is strong to help us, but he wants us to listen to his words. He is called the King of France, the greatest chief of all those who rule on the other shore. He is anxious that peace shall come upon all people and that no one shall wage war without asking permission of his servant Onontio, the governor at Quebec. Therefore, be at peace with your neighbors and most of all with the Illinois. You have had your quarrels with them. But have you not been enough avenged by their losses? They want peace with you, yet they are still strong enough to do you harm. Content yourselves with the glory of having them ask for peace. And their interest is yours. If they are destroyed, will not the Iroquois destroy you the more easily? So take these guns, but use them not for waging war, but for the hunt and for self-defense."

Then at last La Salle chose from his bundles two wampum necklaces — the gifts most common among Indians. Turning to the thirty New England Indians who were with him, he said: "These are other Miamis who come to take with you the places of the warriors whom the Iroquois have killed. Their bodies are the bodies of Indians from New England, but they have the spirit and the heart of the Miamis. Receive them as your brothers."

The council broke up in a tumult of joy and brotherly feeling. High honor had been paid to the dead and splendid gifts bestowed upon the living. On the next day the Miamis came before La Salle to dance and present gifts. They did homage to the good spirits of the sky and the sun and to the God of the French. Then one of their chiefs, Ouabibichagan, presented to their new brother ten beaver skins saying: —

"Never, my brother Ouabicolcata, have we seen so wonderful an event. Never before have we seen a dead man come to life. He must be a great spirit who can thus bring back life. He makes the sky more fair and the sun more bright. He has given you with life, clothes with which to cover us who are wont to be naked.

"We are ashamed that we have not equal gifts to give you. But you, Ouabicolcata, are a brother. You will excuse us. For it was to redeem your bones from the Iroquois that we made ourselves poor. We gave them three thousand beaver skins. This little gift of ten skins is but a sign — is only like the paper which you Frenchmen give to one another — it only means that we promise you all the beavers in the river when next spring shall come."

Again he gave him ten beavers and told him of the joy the Miamis would feel as they went upon their hunts with their brother alive again, and the spirit that gave him back his breath guarding over their happiness. With a third gift of skins he spoke of the French king in these words: —

"We will listen to him; we will put aside our arms; we will break our arrows, and hide our war-clubs at the bottom of the earth. The Illinois are our brothers since they acknowledge our father, and the French king is our father since he has given life back to our brothers."

A fourth and a fifth gift of beaver skins he made and bound the Miamis to Ouabicolcata and their new brothers from New England. At last he handed the white chief for the sixth time ten beavers and said: —

"Do not count the skins, my brother, for we have none left. The Iroquois have all the rest. But accept our hearts in trust for what we will do when spring has come again."

After the gifts the dancing began again and also the feasting from the new kettles. And all day long the three wives of Ouabibichagan, sisters to one another, and the wives of Michetonga, also sisters, danced in the sunshine of spring and in the joy of a people reconciled to their neighbors and happy in the pleasant childlike pretension of a lost brother come back to live with them once more.

As the Miamis danced a band of Illinois were following swift trails westward to the banks of the Mississippi. They had talked with the great white chief who had left Fort Crèvecœur so long ago in the good old days when Chassagoac was alive and when their villages smiled in the sun along the Illinois River. They were carrying back to the Peorias and the Kaskaskias and the Tamaroas and to all their brethren the message from La Salle, that he was still determined to make his trip to the mouth of the Great River, and that he had come to reunite the Miami and Illinois, to plant his men as a guard against the Iroquois, and to snatch back for them the beautiful valley of the Illinois.

XX

STRANGE RITES

Spring was coming, and the giant of the Great Valley, lying stretched at full length, was beginning to stir uneasily. Too long had he slept with his head in the snow far up in the country of the Sioux. His outspread arms, flung to the mountains on either side, began to move, and to the tips of his fingers, entwined in the hills of the Alleghanies and the rough piles of the Rockies, a new life came. The Mississippi River was waking from its winter sleep.

In the land of the Iroquois, by distant Lake Ontario, the ice in little brooks was melting, and snow-water was running down from their banks to flow through the length of the Ohio Valley into the Great River. Over by the foot of the Lake of the Illinois, where the headwaters of the Kankakee crept out from the country of the timorous Miamis, cakes of ice were starting on a long journey down the widening river into the Illinois, there to run smoothly through a deserted valley, past the ruined village of the Kaskaskias, the empty Peoria lodges, and the forsaken fort to find the wide river in the land of the luckless Tamaroas.

Even in the cold Sioux country the tiny sources of the Mississippi were stirring; and the waters grew less chill as they slipped out of the sight of the Sioux hunters and took their way southward past the far-driven tribes of the Illinois — here the Kaskaskias, lower down the Peorias — until they reached the haunts of the Tamaroas and were joined by the waters of the Illinois.

Southward ever the spring water flowed. Here from the Western plains came rushing like a buffalo bull the tawny Missouri, bringing down logs and trees that had passed many and strange peoples on their way from the far unknown West. Out of these Western countries came also the Arkansas to cast its burden into the river farther down.

Now all these waters, gathered in a mighty stream, flowed on past the strange Southern tribes — past the Taensas, watching their sacred fires and guarding their temples in eight villages gathered on a crescent-shaped lake, and past the Natchez and the treacherous

Coroas and Quinipissas — till at last, under the warm Southern sun, the river poured itself out of the bottom of the valley into the salt waters of the Gulf of Mexico.

Thus in the year 1682 the Great Valley awoke from its quiet winter. Soon in the North the Indian women could stir the eager soil and begin their planting. The Indian braves could toss their snowshoes into a corner of the lodge, throw off their winter garments of buffalo hide, and go out into the sunshine as free and happy and unencumbered as God had made them.

All the valley was a playground for the Indians. Its woods and its streams, its prairies and its hills, its herds of buffalo, its deer and bear and wild fowl were theirs. They could build their lodges and hunt game where they willed. They could trade with the tribes of the North and South and of the river valleys on either side; or they could fight with them if they chose. It was a valley full of the best gifts of the good spirits — this land of the Indians. What if there were up around the rivers of the North and East occasional white men? They were few and they brought wonderful gifts. Surely there was room for all.

Below the villages of the Arkansas tribes, which Marquette and Joliet had reached nine years before, the Indians had seen no white man's canoe. It is true their old men told a tale, handed down through long years, of a Spaniard who came into the Great Valley from the East with an army that ravaged and plundered and killed. The leader disappeared, and his men drifted down the river to its mouth and left forever the basin of the Mississippi. But many generations had passed since the time of the mysteriously vanishing De Soto and his cruel followers. Between the French far to the northeast and the Spaniards as far to the southwest there lay the length of the river with room in its broad and smiling valley for the homes and hunting-grounds of a hundred tribes.

It was the month of March, in the villages of the Arkansas tribes, and the air was soft and mild, and the peach trees were in blossom. The banks of the river were low and drowned now with the spring floods; and thick barriers of cane rose up from the swampy shores. Since Marquette and Joliet visited the Arkansas, no white men had entered their villages; but they had learned of the events in the North. When they found that a powerful white chief was building a fort on the Illinois River and giving wonderful presents to the neighboring tribes, they sent a delegation to invite him to come to their country and live.

La Salle had said that he was coming down the river soon, and they had seen the ribs of the great ship he was building. The Arkansas, moreover, had brought home gifts from him to their neighbors and friends. But he had not come in these two long years, and the Indians had been busy with their own concerns—with their hunting and their care of the fields, and with a constant vigilance to prevent an attack by surprise from their enemies the Chickasaws.

On this particular March day a dense fog lay upon the river. In the spring fogs were frequent and were not without danger; for under cover of these concealing mists the Chickasaws might more easily approach unawares. But this morning there were those who watched and they brought news into the upper village that a band of men was coming down the river in canoes. The village flew to arms. The women gathered together and hurried away to the inland, their papooses in cradles swinging from their shoulders. The men, weapons in hand, began to howl their war cries and beat their skin drums. Within an hour the fog disappeared, and they saw a party of men encamped on the bank opposite the village. On a point of land jutting out into the river stood a man who called across to them.

The Arkansas thrust one of their dugouts into the stream and hastened to meet the visitors. When they were within earshot, the man on shore called out in the Illinois tongue to ask who they were. There happened to be an Illinois Indian in the dugout and he replied that they were Arkansas. One of the warriors from the village drew back the string of his bow and let fly an arrow. Then they sat silent and waited. It was their way of inquiring whether peace or war was sought by the strangers. The man on shore did not attempt to return the fire. So with lightened hearts they drew near to learn more of the peaceful newcomers.

It was a white man who met them. His hair was black and long, and his right hand was encased in a glove. It was the Man with the Iron Hand who greeted them on behalf of his leader La Salle. Without delay the Indians sent an embassy to smoke the calumet with La Salle, and soon the Arkansas were welcoming in their village on the west bank of the river the entire band of strangers. La Salle had come at last as he had promised, but he had not come in a mighty ship, but in a fleet of bark canoes with nearly half a hundred men.

There were old friends in his company besides Tonty. The stout-hearted young Boisrondet and the gray-gowned Father Membré were there, and perhaps a score of other Frenchmen. There were also nearly as many of the New England Indians who had joined La Salle at Fort Miami; and with them was a handful of Indian women, who had refused to be left behind, and three little Indian children.

The tribes living in this upper Arkansas village were known as Kappas or Quapaws; and they proved themselves royal entertainers. They gave the strangers quarters by themselves, built lodges for them, and brought them provisions in great abundance. The day following his arrival they danced before La Salle the calumet dance. First the chiefs of the tribe took their places in the midst of an open space, while warriors brought them two calumets decorated with plumage of many colors. The bowls of the calumets were of red pipestone and full of tobacco. Warriors who took part in the dance held gourds hollowed out and filled with pebbles; and two of them had drums made of earthen pots covered with dried pieces of skin.

One group of Indians began to sing, at the same time dancing and shaking their gourd rattles — all in perfect rhythm, though not necessarily in the same time. An Indian might sing with one time, dance with a different time, and shake his gourd with a rhythm more slow or rapid than either. Yet the rhythm of each series of motions or sounds would be perfect in itself.

When the first group stopped, another group took up the song and the dance. Two men beat the skin drums, while the chiefs gravely drew smoke from the long-stemmed calumets and passed them on to La Salle and his men. Then those of the warriors who had gained renown seized, one after another, a great war club, and with it struck blows upon a stout post planted in the ground. With his blows each brave recounted his feats of bravery and told of the scalps he had taken, the enemies he had killed, and the times when he had been first of his band to strike the enemy.

When they had finished this ceremony, they presented gifts of buffalo hides to La Salle. Then La Salle's men also one by one struck the post and told of their own brave deeds and gave presents to the Indians. And all the while the chiefs, Indian and French, smoked the pipes that bound them to peace.

Doubtless this ceremony of the calumet — with the dancing and singing, the recounting of brave deeds, and the giving of gifts — seemed a very curious performance to the French. But equally curious to the Indians must have seemed the ceremonies of the white men on that selfsame day.

La Salle asked permission of the chiefs to raise, in the village, an emblem of the God of the French and of the great King of France. To this the Indians readily agreed. Whereupon Tonty was dispatched with some of the men to make preparations. They cut and smoothed a huge wooden pillar, and upon it they drew a cross, and above the cross they carved the arms of France with these words: —

"LOUIS THE GREAT, KING OF FRANCE AND NAVARRE, REIGNS THIS THIRTEENTH DAY OF MARCH, 1682."

A procession was formed, and the pillar was carried in state to the open space in the midst of the Indian town. Here the procession divided into two columns, with La Salle at the head of one and Tonty leading the other. Every Frenchman was in arms, while the New England Indians with their wives and children steadfastly followed their white leaders.

Father Membré began to sing a curious song; and then the whole procession took up the chant and marched three times around the open square. Three times they sent up a great cry, "Vive le Roi," and discharged their guns in the air. Then they planted the pillar firmly in the ground, cried again, "Vive le Roi," and shot off another volley with their guns.

When it was quiet once more La Salle began a solemn speech in French. The awe-stricken Indians did not understand his words; but later the speech was interpreted for them and they knew that, by the sign of the cross and the king's arms, the white chief was claiming the whole broad valley for his king beyond the seas. What mattered it to the Indians? If the white men would bring them gifts, and if this mysterious pillar would protect them from harm and safeguard them from their enemies, the distant king was welcome to his claim.

With wondering faces the Indians gathered about the pillar when the strange ceremony was over. They placed their hands upon the hewed wood and then rubbed their naked bodies — as if to transfer to themselves some of the medicine in the white men's shaft.

Two days later the strangers embarked in their canoes and left the village of the Kappas; and with them went two Arkansas guides to point out the way to their allies, the Taensas, who lived on a lake near the river many leagues below.

XXI

THE LOWER MISSISSIPPI

For several days the canoes of La Salle's party passed wet banks and thick canebrakes. No longer were to be seen the otter and the flat-tailed beaver, for they had been driven out or devoured by the alligators that now infested the river. As the canoes slid past these huge monsters, sometimes nearly twenty feet in length, the Frenchmen sat snugly in the center of their barks for fear of following the way of the beaver.

At length the Arkansas guides indicated a small cove into which a little brook flowed. It was the beginning of the inland trail to the Taensas; and so the whole party landed and pitched camp on the shore of the bay. La Salle asked Tonty to take with him the two guides, a Frenchman, and one of the New England Indians and proceed up the brook toward the villages.

The men paddled their canoe as far as the water would permit, then packed it upon their shoulders, and under the guidance of the Arkansas Indians picked their way across the swampy country. Finally they reached a lake lying in the form of a crescent, and crossing it in their canoe they came upon an Indian town. The men in the canoe drew in their paddles and stepped out on the shore of the lake. Tonty looked in amazement at the Indian village before him, for in all of his wanderings over the continent he had never seen houses like these. Instead of lodges made of bark or mats or skins fastened to a framework of poles, here were great houses built with thick walls of sun-dried mud and dome-shaped roofs of canes.

To the Arkansas guides, however, the village presented no strange scene. They were in familiar country; and when they reached the shore they began a weird Indian song. Back in the village the Taensas who heard them knew they were friends, and came out to welcome them. They led the visitors first to the lodge of the chief, which was a building forty feet in length with walls two feet thick and ten or twelve feet high, surmounted by a domed roof that reached to a height of about fifteen feet.

They passed through the doorway and stood in the semi-darkness of a large room. In the center of the room a torch, made of dried canes, was burning. Its light gleamed upon shields of burnished copper that hung on every wall and lit up dimly hides painted with all manner of pictures. In the flickering light of the torch white-robed figures stood out from the dusk of the room. They were old men of the tribe, sixty of them, and they stood facing an alcove where, on a couch, with his three wives beside him, sat the chief. He was dressed like the old men, in a white robe made from the bark of the mulberry tree; and pearls as big as peas hung from his ears.

There were girls and women in the room, and here and there a child with its mother; but over all the group was a respectful quiet, a dignified reverence for the chief who sat upon the couch gazing curiously at Tonty and his companions. The old men, standing with their hands upon their heads, burst out in unison with a cry, "Ho-ho-ho-ho," and then seated themselves upon mats laid on the floor. The visitors also were given mats to sit upon.

One of the Arkansas guides rose and began to address the chief. He told him that the white men had come to make an alliance with him, but just now they were sorely in need of food. Then he swung from his own body a buffalo skin and presented it to the chief. Tonty, too, delighted him with the gift of a knife — for the knives and hatchets of the Taensas were rude instruments made of flint.

The chief ordered food to be sent to the men who were waiting over on the Mississippi and a banquet to be prepared for their guests. It was a dignified feast, at which slaves waited upon the chief. They brought him dishes and cups, made of pottery with the fine art in which his people excelled. No one else used his dishes or drank out of his cup.

A little tottering child started to cross the floor between the chief and the flaming torch. With a quick reproof his mother seized him and made him walk around the torch. Such was the respect which they paid to the living chief; and when a chief died it was their custom to sacrifice perhaps a score of men and women, that they might accompany him to the country beyond the grave and serve him there.

When the feast was over and the visitors came out from the lodge of the chief, they saw across the way a building somewhat similar in shape and size. It was the sacred temple of the tribe. Into the mud walls that inclosed it were stuck spikes on which were hung the skulls of enemies. On the roof, facing the rising sun which the Taensas worshiped, were the carved figures of three eagles. Inside the temple were preserved the bones of departed chiefs. An altar stood in the middle of the room, and here the sacred fire was kept burning. Two old medicine men sat beside it, unwinking and grave, guarding it by day and by night.

The chief was highly pleased with his visitors. If the man who had sent Tonty to his village had been an Indian, it would have been beneath the chief's dignity to call upon him. But he sent word to La Salle by Tonty that he would pay him a visit, and on the next day he set out. He sent before him a master of ceremonies with six men to prepare the way. They took with them a beautifully woven mat for him to rest upon, and with their hands they swept the ground over which he would pass. As he came down the little creek in his dugout canoe his followers beat upon drums and his wives and the other women in the party sang songs of praise. He landed and approached La Salle's camp, dressed in his white robe and preceded by two men carrying white plume fans and a third bearing two shields of shining brass. The two chiefs met and exchanged presents; and after a quiet call the dignified Taensas chief returned to his village on the lake.

When La Salle's men pushed their canoes out from the shore of the cove, well laden with provisions from the Taensas, they left behind their Arkansas guides and four of the New England Indians who were fearful of the dangers below. But there were now two new members of the party, for the Taensas had given to Tonty and his Mohegan companion two slave boys, captured from the Coroas farther south.

They had not gone far when they observed upon the river a single canoe, to which a number of the party gave chase. The canoe of Tonty, outstripping the others, had nearly reached the strange bark when they saw a band of perhaps a hundred Indians, armed with bows and arrows, on the shore ready to defend their comrade in the canoe. Tonty, after consulting with La Salle, offered to take a pipe of peace to the band of savages. He crossed to the shore, presented the calumet for the Indians to smoke, and made a gift of a knife to one of the old men who seemed to be a chief. The Indians were of the nation of Natchez, and they showed their desire for peace by joining hands. This presented some difficulty to Tonty, but he bade his men join hands in his place, and the treaty of peace was concluded. Soon the rest of the party came ashore, and La Salle, taking with him a few of his men, made a visit to the village which lay three leagues from the river.

The Natchez were a powerful people related to the Taensas, and, like them, they worshiped the sun and maintained a sacred temple. La Salle spent the night in their village; and while he slept a swift runner hurried through the darkness to the village of the Coroas to ask the chief to come and visit their guest. The chief of the Coroas set out at once and traveled all night to reach the Natchez village and pay his respects to La Salle. For several days the white leader visited with the Natchez, and when he rejoined Tonty on the shore of the river the Coroa chief came with him. He accompanied the white men down the river to his own village, six leagues below, where his tribe gave the strangers a friendly reception. Here Tonty's little Coroa slave seized the opportunity to escape to his people. But the boy who had been given to the Mohegan was not so fortunate and remained with the party of explorers.

Thus far peace had attended the journey of La Salle; but it was not to be so always. Without stopping they passed the village of the Humas and the high bank where a red pole, or *baton rouge*, marked the boundary between the territory of the Humas and the tribes to the south. As they approached the village of the Quinipissas, they heard the sound of drums and war cries, and a party sent out by La Salle to reconnoiter was received with a volley of arrows. La Salle decided not to stop; and picking up his men, passed on down the river.

At length, early in April of the year 1682, the party reached the long-dreamed-of mouth of the river; and La Salle, on the 9th of the month, full of joy, took possession, in the name of the King of France, of all the lands watered by the rivers that flowed into the basin of the Mississippi. No white man before them had traveled from Canada to the Gulf. As they saw the cross rise in the swampy land near the sea and the arms of their king held up to the southern sky, the hearts of La Salle and Tonty, of Father Membré and every Frenchman there beat high with pride.

And the dusky New England Indians — devoted to their leader and far-wandered in a valley which meant nothing to them — rejoiced also, as every Indian rejoices and feels pride in the end of a long journey, be it for vengeance, for game, or for adventure. As for the young Coroa lad, who stood in their midst, the only representative of the people of the Mississippi, he was too young and his people and his race were too young to understand what had happened in their valley.

The voyagers now turned the prows of their canoes to the north and began the slow ascent of the river. They were so nearly out of provisions that La Salle determined to stop at the Quinipissa village for food, in spite of their former hostility. Coming upon four women of the tribe, he sent one of them home to her people with presents and a message of peace. Keeping the other three as hostages, he waited across the stream from the village. Soon there came Quinipissas who invited him to cross over to their side. La Salle did so and pitched camp a short distance from the village. The Indians brought him food and he released the three women, but still kept a careful guard.

That night watches were posted with unusual care. Crevel, one of the Frenchmen, was the last to keep guard. It was now within a half-hour of dawn. Already faint lights were beginning to shine, when he heard a noise in the canes. He spoke to a comrade who said it was only some dogs. But Tonty had heard their words and called to them to be on guard, and La Salle, in whose eyes was little sleep, leaped up with the cry, "To arms." In a moment the camp was ready for an attack.

At the same instant came the war cries of the Quinipissas on all sides of them. Guns flashed and arrows flew in the spreading light. When the sun came up and the Quinipissas looked upon their slain warriors they turned and fled, with the whites after them until recalled by La Salle. The New England Indians came excitedly back to camp waving scalps which they had taken from the enemy.

Later in the morning La Salle with half of his men went to the edge of the village and broke up the Indians' pirogues under their very eyes. Then with no one hurt, the party of explorers put off upstream in their canoes. Coming again to the country of the Coroas they were welcomed to the village, but there was a strange new feeling in the air. The French saw Quinipissas among them, and learned that they were allies. The young Coroa captive soon had told the story of the battle to his people. When the voyagers sat down to eat they found themselves surrounded by more than a thousand warriors. They ate with their arms within quick reach, for no one knew when massacre might be attempted. Taking counsel, however, the Indians finally allowed their visitors to proceed up the Mississippi in peace.

When they reached the village of the Taensas, the chief in his white cloak was as dignified and kind as ever, and rejoiced greatly at the scalps which the Mohegans showed him. Again they passed the villages of the Arkansas. And now La Salle fell sick — so seriously that, in alarm lest he should not reach Canada, he sent Tonty ahead to carry the good news of the trip to the French settlements. Tonty with four men hurried northward. He had passed the

Ohio and was drawing near the Illinois Valley when one day thirty Illinois warriors burst out of the woods with drawn bows, taking the party for Iroquois. But just in time one warrior recognized Tonty and cried out, "It is my comrade! They are Frenchmen!" After a short stop at the Tamaroa village, Tonty pushed on to the white settlements.

By the time La Salle, slowly recovering from his illness, joined Tonty at Mackinac, word had come to the white men about the Lakes that the cross and the arms of France had been raised at the mouth of the Mississippi. And the Illinois tribes in the upper valley, still afraid to return to their deserted homes, took heart when they heard of the safe return of La Salle and the Man with the Iron Hand from their long trip to the sea. For they had not forgotten La Salle's promise to build a fort to protect them from the Iroquois, and make it safe for them to return to the valley they had lost.

XXII

THE GATHERING OF THE TRIBES

On the south bank of the river Illinois, a mile or more above the plain where lay the deserted village of the Kaskaskias, a great rock rose sheer from the water to a height of over a hundred feet. Three sides of the rock were like the walls of a mediæval castle. At the fourth side by a rugged pathway one might climb laboriously from behind to the level top where oaks and cedars grew.

In the month of January, 1683, this rock was the scene of busy doings. On the scant acre of ground upon its summit, Frenchmen had felled trees and were building cabins and storehouses and palisaded walls and erecting a fortification about the whole area. Up the steep pathway other Frenchmen and stalwart Indians were dragging timbers to aid in the construction of fort and dwellings. Moving here and there among the men was the dominant figure of La Salle; and yonder were the iron-handed Tonty and his friend Boisrondet. Many of the Frenchmen had been with La Salle on his trip to the Gulf the year before; and the busy Indians were his faithful band of Mohegans and Abenakis.

La Salle had reached Mackinac after his arduous trip to the sea, with little strength left, but with many plans for the future. He had explored the river to the mouth. It now remained for him to make use of the Great Valley. His enemies, the rich merchants of Quebec and Montreal, had become so bitter in their opposition to him that he knew it would be difficult to carry out his plans from Canada as a base. And so he determined to cut loose as soon as possible from the valley of the St. Lawrence and bring his supplies and men by sea from France to the mouth of the Mississippi, thence up the river to the trading-posts which he would found among the tribes along its banks.

Such was the vision that rose before La Salle day and night — a vision of the long river valley held together by a chain of forts and dépôts for the fur trade, of friendly Indians coming with their canoes laden with furs to exchange with the French for merchandise, of French settlements growing up in the wilderness, of a great post at the mouth of the river, and of swift-sailing ships plying between the Gulf and far-away France.

But to bring this vision to reality La Salle must first repopulate the Illinois Valley and unite the Indian tribes of that region to repel the bands of Iroquois who threatened again to invade the valley of the Great River. So he sent Tonty out from Mackinac, in the fall of 1682, to begin a fort around which they might gather a colony of the far-scattered tribes. Not long afterward, La Salle, hearing fresh rumors of an Iroquois invasion, sent Father Membré on to Canada and France to report the exploration of the Mississippi, and then joined Tonty on the Illinois River.

Many times in their journeyings up and down the Illinois, La Salle and Tonty had noted the high rock rising from the riverside near the Kaskaskia village. What a rallying-point this would make for the scattered people! La Salle was well content to build here his wilderness fort; and without waiting for winter to loosen its icy grip upon the land he put his men, red-skinned and white, at work.

They were many weeks building the citadel upon the rock; and when, toward spring, it was finished, La Salle and Tonty looked out upon the country roundabout with a feeling of great security. In the river below them was a small island, and here they prepared to plant their crops. It was within gun-shot of the fort, from which a raking fire could prevent any enemy from landing and attacking the men while at work in the fields. Four heavy pieces of timber were placed so as to project over the edge of the rock, and from these, in case of need, water could be drawn straight up from the clear current of the Illinois River.

The fortress completed, there remained the gathering of the tribes. On a day in March, 1683, Tonty climbed down the rugged pathway and set out across the prairies to visit the Indian tribes. Nearly a hundred leagues he trailed from village to village. In the lodges of the Shawnees he told of the return of La Salle to the Illinois Valley and reminded them of their promise to come and join him.

He visited the Miamis and talked of the Iroquois who had killed so many of their braves. Even now rumors of another invasion were in the air. But if the Miamis would come out to the colony of the French they need have no fear, for Ouabicolcata had come again into the valley of the Illinois and on the bank of the river had built a strong fort to guard his brothers the Miamis.

It was many leagues toward the setting sun that Tonty traveled before he found the tribes of the Illinois. But one day he walked into the camp of his old-time companions and seated himself upon their mats. With great joy they received him and gave into his left hand the calumet of peace and feasted him as they had done three years before in their ancient home.

They were wondering, perhaps, if the ice were now breaking up in the river beside the forsaken village and if the snow were melting down to nourish the white-oak trees on the opposite shore. They saw the whole river again as they listened to the words of the Man with the Iron Hand. Well did they know every bend in its course. And what Indian could forget that great pile of rock on the south side of the river a half-league above their old town? Every crevice and seam in its weather-worn sides came back to them. They saw in their minds the ravine on the eastern side where a little brook ran down to the river. They saw again the rugged path that led to the summit; and they tried to picture Frenchmen climbing to the heights where the fort of La Salle now stood. It was a fort to guard them from the Iroquois, said Tonty, if only they would come back and settle in their old haunts. Nor was it difficult to persuade them. La Salle was their father, they said. Only a year ago he had visited them, told them of his plans, and urged them to forgive the Miamis and join with them against the common foe.

Their fear of the Iroquois called them; their love for their father La Salle and their brother Tonty and for the gifts these men brought called them; and perhaps, not least of all, the old village where they had wooed and married their Indian women, where they had brought home scalps and captives, where they had entertained their friends and buried their dead — their home of other days — called them. Yes, they would come back to the river of the Illinois and raise new lodge-poles on the site of their old town in the colony of their father La Salle.

So Tonty returned from his circuit of the tribes and climbed the rock to Fort St. Louis to report to La Salle the coming of the Indians. Soon the tribes began to gather. The Shawnees came with some smaller tribes from the south and settled directly behind the rock. Nor was it many weeks before the Illinois, trailing back through the valley they had given up, came in a great rejoicing army, with their women and their papooses, to the north bank of the river. Strong-armed Indian women raised the poles for new lodges and laid fresh mats upon the framework. They brought wood which they laid in piles down the center of each long lodge; and soon out of holes in a hundred roofs rose the smoke from the fires of the Illinois. They stirred the soil in the neglected fields and planted new crops. As best they could they put to rights the desecrated graves of their dead, and took up again the life they had left off at the time of the Iroquois invasion.

But it was not quite the same to these Illinois, for the blight of overwhelming disaster still lay upon them and fear smoldered deep down in each heart. When they looked up the river to where Fort St. Louis stood guard like a sentinel upon its high rock, they took courage;

but when they turned away and looked upon the scenes which they had just redeemed from Iroquois desolation, their hearts sometimes failed them.

Families from all of the tribes of the Illinois Confederacy now gathered in the village, ready to join hands in a common cause with the Shawnees and other nations from the south, and eager to ally themselves once more with the fickle Miamis who were still at their villages to the east.

Only the return of La Salle to the Illinois country had kept the Miamis from leaving their villages near the foot of the Lake and fleeing to the Mississippi; and even now, with Fort St. Louis built and garrisoned and with the Illinois and Shawnees gathered in the vicinity, they were thrown into a panic by news from the St. Lawrence River that the Iroquois were on their way to the valley of the Illinois.

The French and Indians at La Salle's colony having learned of the Miami alarm, La Salle made ready to go at once to their villages to reassure them. The Illinois, however, looked with dread upon his going, and they tried to dissuade him. Perhaps they recalled too vividly the disasters that followed his departure three years before. Then, too, they had heard evil rumors. The French at Green Bay had told their traders that if the Illinois settled near La Salle, he would abandon them to the Iroquois. The Indians frankly recounted these tales, and La Salle patiently told them of his enemies at Green Bay who wished him ill, — perhaps because they were jealous of his beaver trade, — and he promised them that, although it was important for him to go on from the Miami villages to Canada, he would come back at once if the Iroquois should approach.

Partly reassured they let him go. They did not know what grievous burdens weighed upon La Salle as he took his way eastward. At the fort in charge of Tonty he had left only twenty Frenchmen, with hardly a hundred rounds of powder and ball. Again and again he had sent men down to the Canadian settlements to bring back supplies and ammunition and French volunteers for his garrison. But they had not come back; and La Salle rightly suspected that the new governor, La Barre, who had succeeded Frontenac at Quebec, was in league with his enemies and willing to wreck his colony by preventing his men from returning with supplies and reinforcements. His only hope was to go in person to Canada to secure aid; and this he intended to do after seeing the Miamis.

Finding the Miamis full of terror and ready to fly, he immediately called the chiefs and elders in to a council. If the Miamis, instead of fleeing to the Mississippi, would move over and join his colony at the fort, they would all fight their battles together. He was going East now for reinforcements; but if he should hear of the near approach of the Iroquois, he would join them at Fort St. Louis at once. The Miamis gave attentive ear to La Salle. Was he not their brother Ouabicolcata, raised from the dead to protect them? The next day they began to move in three great armies toward Fort St. Louis, while La Salle went on toward the Lake.

From the Miami camp a hunter started out one day accompanied by his dog. Following a roebuck, he strayed off from his band and was suddenly attacked by four Iroquois and fatally wounded. The dog, seeing his master shot down, began to bark at the top of his lungs. The Iroquois, in alarm, took to their heels. At once the Miamis were hot upon their trail. They followed their tracks until they came to a trail so broadly beaten as to indicate a large army of the enemy. Realizing their lack of numbers, the Miamis retraced their steps and made haste to combine their three armies into one before continuing the journey.

The alarm, meanwhile, had reached the colony about the fort, and war parties of Illinois left their village to meet the oncoming foe. Soon they encountered an Iroquois party of forty and took one of them prisoner. With savage glee they brought him into camp. Perhaps he was one of the hated band that had despoiled their village. It was their turn now for vengeance. They presented the captive to Tonty to be put to death. But Tonty replied that it was not the custom of his people to kill their prisoners of war. Then they offered him to their allies, the Shawnees, who with savage ceremonies burned him to death.

The Illinois had won a victory over the invaders, but it did not bring them security. They wished for the return of La Salle; and Tonty sent off two runners at top speed to tell his chief that if he did not return at once the tribes were likely to melt away to the Far West and out of reach of the Iroquois.

It was not long until the army of the Miamis arrived. A league above the fort, on the north side of the river, was a long rock bluff, and here they settled and put up their lodges. La Salle, true to his promise, soon came back to the colony, much to the joy of both Indians and whites. From his high fort on the rock he now looked down upon Indian villages, with their thousands of Indian braves gathered like the army of a mediæval baron, and rejoiced in the thought that a long step had been made toward the realization of his dream of the Great Valley.

XXIII

FORT ST. LOUIS

THE summer that followed the return of La Salle to Fort St. Louis was an anxious one for the colony. Iroquois were still in the valley, and the Indians about the fort were full of an apprehension that sometimes almost amounted to panic. Yet they clung to their faith in their French protectors; and the bands of invaders, not wishing to taste the vengeance of so strong a union of their enemies, did not that summer molest the group of villages.

But the months of waiting brought no aid or reinforcements to the fort on the high rock, and each day made it more clear that La Salle's enemies were in power in Canada. More strongly than ever there grew upon him the determination to go in person to France and fit out an expedition which could come by sea to the mouth of the Mississippi and thence with men and supplies to the fort on the Illinois. Finally he could wait no longer; and so, late in August, accompanied by two Shawnee Indians, he left the fort in charge of Tonty and started upon his long journey.

La Salle had not gone far upon his way when he met a fleet of canoes laden with Frenchmen and supplies. If there arose in his mind any flicker of hope that these were his own men returning at last with reinforcements, it soon died out, for the leader of the party, the Chevalier de Baugis, brought with him a commission as commander of Fort St. Louis in place of La Salle, to whom he presented an order from the new governor of Canada commanding him to proceed at once to Quebec. There was nothing to be done but submit. Before continuing his journey, La Salle sent a letter to Tonty telling him to give up gracefully, but to remain at the fort to take care of their private possessions.

When the Chevalier de Baugis arrived at the rock, Tonty turned over the command of the fort; and the garrison, now reinforced but full of unquiet, began to prepare for the winter season. It was not a period of harmony at the fort, for the new officer had little ability in governing a Western post and spent much of his time in trying to alienate the followers of La Salle. Tonty, in spite of his leader's orders to live

HEAL

at peace with his successor, was not able to endure such performances, and many and bitter were the clashes between the two men that winter.

But with the spring came an event which, for the time at least, made the men at the fort put aside their quarrels and work side by side. Iroquois bands, it appeared, still lingered in the Western country, particularly around the headwaters of the Kankakee and over toward the Mississippi. They had not had sufficient courage to attack the colony which La Salle had founded; but they found other prey.

A group of fourteen Frenchmen, in canoes, was making its way, in March, 1684, toward the Illinois. The new governor, La Barre himself, had sent them out to trade in that region in spite of the fact that the King of France had given to La Salle exclusive control of the fur trade in the valley of the Illinois. They were approaching some rapids in the Kankakee River one day, little suspecting danger, when two hundred Iroquois suddenly appeared on the bank.

Sixty Indians leaped into the water and captured the canoes, which with little ado they drew to the bank. The terror-stricken Frenchmen wildly protested as the dripping savages, their wet bodies glistening and their faces lighted with the lust of plunder, pillaged the seven canoes and carried off the owners. With fine contempt the Iroquois tore into pieces the Frenchmen's permits from the governor. A few of the Indians took charge of the canoes with their valuable load of merchandise, while the others drove their captives across country for nine days toward Fort St. Louis.

As they went the white men were plied with questions as to the fort. Was the Man with the Iron Hand there? Was La Salle at the fort? When the French replied that a new commander was in charge and that La Salle had been recalled, the wily savages said that they knew it, but were asking to see if the French were telling the truth. They were going, they said, to attack the fort. Finally they let the Frenchmen go, threatening to break their heads, however, if they were found in the neighborhood of the fort.

The Iroquois pushed on to their conquest. When they sighted the high rock, they advanced cautiously, only to find the frowning citadel prepared for battle. Runners had come to the fort the day before with news of the Iroquois approach. Up to the base of the rock the invaders crept and drove arrow and ball at the heights above. They even tried an assault up the rugged pathway, but were repulsed with great loss. For six days they besieged the wilderness castle, but all in vain. At length they made a few captives from the neighboring tribes and tried to creep off. But the bands of Shawnees and Illinois and Miamis had been waiting their turn, and now hard upon the heels of the retreating foe they pushed with eager weapons. They killed many and brought their scalps home in triumph to the villages around the rock. Fort St. Louis had had its baptism of fire— and the fire had only hardened the courage of the garrison and the Indians of the colony.

Two months after this attack upon the fort, there came down the river a fleet of French canoes under command of Sieur de la Durantaye and containing sixty Frenchmen as reinforcements for the garrison upon the rock. Durantaye was a brave officer who had been sent out the year before by Governor La Barre to the posts on the Lake of the Illinois. Many a time he had found it necessary to make trips to Fort St. Louis to give assistance to the incapable Chevalier de Baugis. On this occasion there came with him from Green Bay the priest Allouez, who gathered up his black robe as he climbed the steep pathway to the fort.

Well did the Indians know this priest. Years before he had come to take the place of their beloved Father Marquette. And then on Christmas Eve, in the winter of their disaster, he had heard from the Miamis that La Salle was coming and had vanished like a spirit into the night. In the years that followed there had come from Green Bay, where he had gone, constant rumors that La Salle was their enemy. Now was this man come again to them when La Salle was gone and Tonty robbed of his power.

The visit of Durantaye was not alone to bring reinforcements, for he had with him an order from Governor La Barre commanding Tonty to leave the fort and go to Quebec. Tonty did not hesitate. Boisrondet, with a few faithful followers, remained in the fort, while the Man with the Iron Hand, taking leave of white and red friends, set off almost alone up the river toward distant Canada. He had spent nearly six years in the wilderness — faithful years in which he had followed his leader through ill fate and fortune. He had made warm friends with a dozen tribes and helped gather them together in the colony about Fort St. Louis. Now with a great bitterness he saw fort and colony turned over to those who, though French, were yet enemies of his friend La Salle.

Durantaye returned to the Lake, and De Baugis was left to do as he pleased. The Indians did not find in him the qualities they had admired in La Salle and Tonty. He knew little of their ways and perhaps cared less to learn about them. Trouble soon arose in the colony and he was powerless to check it. The Miamis, rising suddenly, fell upon the Illinois with great slaughter; thus making probable a disruption of the colony and the inevitable destruction of both nations by the Iroquois.

A year of incompetent rule went by. Then in the month of June, 1685, word came to the tribes that Tonty had come back. Down the river which he had ascended alone with sorrow in his heart, he now came in triumph, and climbing the path to the fort held out in his left hand an order to De Baugis to give him back the command of the fort and garrison.

La Salle in France had won the favor of the king. He had been given ships to make a voyage to the mouth of the Mississippi and men to man them, and guns and supplies and merchandise. All this had happened in the spring and summer of 1684. La Forest, one of La Salle's lieutenants, was sent from Paris to Canada to take charge of Fort Frontenac, which La Barre had seized, and to give to Tonty a commission as captain and the governorship of Fort St. Louis. La Forest had gone out to Fort Frontenac that fall, but winter prevented Tonty from reaching his far western post until June of the following year.

After the disappointed De Baugis had left, Tonty set about conciliating the tribes. This was no easy task. But the Illinois and the Miamis finally listened to his persuasions, accepted his gifts, and agreed once more to live in peace.

To Tonty it must have seemed that the vision which he cherished and shared with La Salle was nearer realization than ever before. It was now almost a year since La Salle had set sail from France. Perhaps by this time he had already founded his fort at the mouth of the Mississippi and was coming up the Great River to join the followers who so eagerly waited for him at Fort St. Louis.

XXIV

THE LOST CHIEF

From their winter camp on the river banks eighty leagues below Fort St. Louis a band of Illinois looked up, late in February of 1686, to see their friend Tonty, with twenty-five Frenchmen and a handful of Shawnees, come paddling down the stream. In June of the year before, he had come back to take command of the fort with the good news that La Salle had sailed from France for the mouth of the Mississippi. During the summer he had persuaded their chiefs to join in peace once more with the Miamis.

But with the fall disquieting news had come. Rumor said that La Salle had landed on the shore of the Gulf; that one of his ships was wrecked and pillaged by the Southern tribes who had attacked him; and that he was struggling with Indian foes and sorely in need of food. Tonty, greatly alarmed, had gone up to Mackinac, but had learned little to encourage him in regard to his leader.

Returning to the fort, most of the way on foot, he sent out Indians to the Mississippi River in search of news. But they found none. Then Tonty determined to go himself down the river to the sea in search of his lost chief. He started in the middle of winter with nearly half of his garrison. For forty leagues they dragged their canoes over the ice of the river until they came to open water halfway down to the Indian camp.

Tonty had little time to linger in the camp, but he had exciting news to tell the Indians. La Barre, governor of Canada, had been withdrawn and the new governor, Marquis Denonville, was planning a great war upon the Iroquois villages. He wanted Tonty to gather a band of Western Indians and join with other bands under Du Luth and Durantaye to reinforce the army from Canada, and he had sent word to Tonty to come to Canada to confer with him about the matter. But Tonty had insisted that his first duty was to search for La Salle; the other must await his return. Would the Illinois join him the next spring and help wage war upon the land of their enemies?

Tonty knew well that there could only be one answer to his question. The Illinois, who keenly remembered the fiendish raids upon their land, now saw their opportunity for revenge; and at once they began to dream of the time when Tonty should return from his voyage. But they were anxious, too, for news of La Salle, and they gave Tonty five of their men to accompany him to the mouth of the river.

With this addition to the party Tonty's men dipped their paddles into the cold stream and were soon out of sight, leaving the Illinois camp buzzing with excitement. The fleet of canoes soon entered the Mississippi and made swift progress down its broad current. Somewhere above the mouth of the Arkansas River, after Tonty and his men had been traveling many days, they happened upon a war party of a hundred Kappas. The Indians made ready for war at first sight of the canoes, but, finding who it was, brought out the pipe of peace and together the two parties went on to the village.

Here and at the lower Arkansas villages the Indians danced the calumet dance before Tonty and sent him on his way in peace. The Frenchmen made a visit to the village on the lake where the white-robed Taensas welcomed them. They, too, danced the calumet dance and were most cordial to the visitors. But Tonty could not stop long. His canoes were full of food for the hungry La Salle, and he had men and guns to help his chief fight battles. He must hasten on to the sea. At the village of the Coroas he stopped long enough to upbraid the chief for the treachery of his tribe four years before. He passed the village of the Quinipissas without landing.

On the 9th day of April, Tonty and his party came to the sea. Four years before on this same day La Salle had raised the cross and the arms of France and had taken possession of the Great Valley for the king. But now, though he had had nearly two years to reach the mouth of the river by sea, La Salle was nowhere to be found. Nor was there any sign that he and his ships and men had been there. Tonty's anxiety deepened as he searched in vain the neighboring channels. He made up two exploring parties and sent one east and one west along the coast of the Gulf. Throwing together a rude fort on an island near the mouth, he waited. When three days were gone both parties had returned. They had explored more than half a hundred leagues of the coast, and had come back because their drinking-water was gone. They had seen nothing but wet shores and the salty sea. Nowhere was there sign of the lost chief.

Up in Canada, meanwhile, Governor Denonville was waiting for Tonty to come and confer with him about the Iroquois raid. Tonty took counsel with his men. One thing more might be done. They were a considerable party — a third of a hundred — and they had stout canoes. Why not skirt the coast of the Gulf, round the point of Florida, pass up the eastern shore of the continent as far as New York, and thence across to Canada and the waiting governor? It was a bold plan, but a reckless one, and Tonty did not insist upon it.

With heavy heart he finally began the ascent of the river. The wind and waves had wrought havoc with the arms of the king which La Salle had raised, and Tonty replaced them. In a hole in a tree he left a letter for La Salle, and then went on to the village of the Quinipissas. These Indians were a chastened people, for the years had not wiped from their memory the punishment that La Salle had put upon them for their treachery. Now they sued humbly for peace, and Tonty granted it. Then he wrote another letter to his leader and gave it to the chief of the Quinipissas, telling him to deliver it to La Salle if he ever came into this region. The Indian clung to this letter like a sacred treasure and thirteen years later gave it proudly into the hands of a white chief who had come up the river from the sea.

Tonty and his companions continued their journey. When they reached the mouth of the Arkansas some of the men asked leave to plant a new French settlement on a tract of land which La Salle had granted to Tonty four years before. Tonty was willing; and so Jean Couture and several others pitched camp on the shore of the Arkansas River near its mouth and watched their comrades pass on without them. Then they built a log house with a palisade of stakes around it. It was a small settlement, but it was of strange importance in the story of the next three years.

On the 24th of June the disappointed search party was welcomed on the high rock of Fort St. Louis. But Tonty could not tarry at the fort. Taking with him two Illinois chiefs, he went on up the river and across the Great

Lakes to where Denonville waited to
him.

Plans for a great gathering of the enem
the Iroquois took form rapidly. The two Illi
chiefs, who came back from the visit to th
Canadian governor late in 1686, were full of tales that roused their people. Runners, sent out from the fort, informed all the tribes that war was to be waged in the spring and asked them to join Tonty at Fort St. Louis.

When April of 1687 came, the fort on the rock saw the smoke rise from many fires, for Tonty was giving a dog-feast for his Indian warriors. Illinois, Shawnees, Mohegans, and Miamis gathered for the fray. La Forest had already set out with a band of Frenchmen; Durantaye and Du Luth were gathering together their warriors over on the Lake; and in the latter part of April, Bellefontaine, left with twenty men in charge of the fort, watched Tonty with sixteen Frenchmen and the band of Indian braves depart for the war in the far East.

THE M

and To
letter t
Quin
if

XXV

NEWS FROM LA SALLE

Spring and summer passed quietly along the Illinois River. Tonty and his combined army had not yet returned from the Iroquois war; and those who had stayed at home to protect the fort and villages found no invaders to molest them. Boisrondet, the commissary of the fort, was busy with the fields of the French. The Indians, too, planted their crops and tended them. The braves visited the little garrison from time to time, hunted and fished some, gambled with cherry-stones more, and basked in the sun most of all.

September was half gone, and still there was nothing to break the monotony. The fourteenth of the month was Sunday, and perhaps in the fort the black-robed Father Allouez, sick and confined to his room, took some notice of the day. But to the Indians, one day was like another. It so happened that a group of them early in the afternoon were in the fields down the river from the fort. Suddenly one of their number, a Shawnee named Turpin, looking off to the stream sparkling in the sun, saw an Indian dugout approaching. In a moment he was at the water's edge scanning with eager eyes the occupants of the bark. They came nearer, were even with him, passed by upstream; but he recognized no one of them. There was a strapping big Frenchman, two men in priestly robes, two other white men, and several strange Indians. Where had these men come from? No one knew of their going down the river.

When the strangers had passed, Turpin slipped across the fields and again came to the bank of the river higher up. This time the men in the dugout called to him. They were of the party of La Salle, they said. For a while the Indian studied them intently. Then catching the name La Salle, he was off on the dead run to the fort. Up the steep pathway he went as if on wings, and burst into the palisaded entrance with the cry that La Salle was coming.

Out of the inclosure with a bound jumped Boisrondet and the blacksmith, and down the side of the rock and around the base to the bank of the river they went faster than the Indian had come. Another Frenchman and a group of

Indians were ahead of them, however, and were already leading the white men to the fort. Full of surprise and joy Boisrondet and his comrade embraced the strangers, who were five in number. The quick eye of Boisrondet ran over all of them, then looked back toward the river.

"But where is La Salle?" he asked. Of the two men who replied, one was a heavy-built, honest-faced man, the other a priest. The priest was the Abbé Cavelier, an own brother of La Salle; his companion was Henri Joutel, a trusted follower of the lost chief. La Salle, they said, had accompanied them part of the way and had left them at a place about forty leagues from the village of the Cenis; and when he left them he was in good health.

If there was anything peculiar about their reply Boisrondet did not at the time seriously note it. Nor did he notice the silence of the gray-robed friar who stood beside the speakers. He was too full of joy at news from his chief, and listened with ready ear as they added that they had orders from La Salle to go on to France to report his travels and bring aid.

It was two o'clock in the afternoon when, after their exchange of greetings, the whole party climbed to the fort towering high above the landscape. Volleys from the guns of the garrison saluted them, and the commander, Bellefontaine, came forward to greet them. Then the strangers crossed over to the little chapel to give thanks on that September Sabbath for their safe arrival among friends.

Father Allouez, who lay sick in his room, received with alarm the news that a party of La Salle's men had arrived at the fort. Was La Salle among them? With great relief he learned that he was not. Allouez sent word that he would like to talk with some of the party; and so La Salle's brother and the quiet Father Douay, together with Joutel, entered the sick man's chamber.

At first they talked of other matters — of affairs in far-away France, of the stamping-out of the heresy of Calvinism, and of the twenty years' truce with the Emperor. At length the sick man asked them of La Salle. As they had told Boisrondet, so they now told Allouez that La Salle was well when they parted from him — and they added that he also had planned to come to the Illinois country and perhaps would be there before long. Thereupon the look of foreboding deepened upon the face of Allouez. As they left the sick-room the three men asked themselves why the priest seemed so displeased at the coming of La Salle.

The arrival of the five men of La Salle's party was a welcome break in the monotony of life in the little colony; and glad would the garrison and the Indians alike have been to have had them stay. But they were anxious to go on — in particular the Abbé Cavelier, who seemed to be impatient of delay. He asked Boisrondet for a canoe and men to take them on to the Lakes, for the Arkansas guides who had brought them up the river must now return with their canoe to their own people. Yes, Boisrondet replied, he had a canoe, but the difficulty was to find capable men for guides. On Wednesday, however, three canoe-men arrived from Mackinac and agreed to conduct the party to that post.

Four days after their arrival at the fort the visitors were again on their way to the Lakes and Canada with Shawnee Indians to carry their provisions. When they reached the Lake of the Illinois the waves were tossing to an alarming height and storms kept them on shore for a week or more. At last, giving up in despair, they turned about, buried their supplies in a cache, and walked across country back to the fort.

Already the Indian warriors from Tonty's party were straggling back full of the good news of an overwhelming defeat of the Seneca Nation of Iroquois. Tonty, with his Frenchmen and their Indian allies, had taken a valiant part in the great raid in July, and now was on his way homeward. The colony took on new life, as with each incoming group the joy of the Indians increased.

At length, on October 27, Tonty himself came down the river and climbed the path to Fort St. Louis. Guns roared, the men at the fort crowded around him, and admiring Indians hung upon his footsteps. But these five strangers! Tonty's eyes fell upon the long robe and the priestly face of the Abbé Cavelier. La Salle's brother here in his fort! Well did he know the face, and little did he like its owner; but he had been one of the lost party. What, then, of La Salle? Quick and intense came the questions from the iron-handed commander.

Again the Abbé and Joutel told their story. La Salle had come from the far southwest coast with them almost to the villages of the Cenis Indians who lived west of the Arkansas, and there he had left them; and when he left them he was in good health. Beside the little group stood Father Anastasius Douay with silent lips. Nor did the mariner Tessier or young Cavelier, the nephew of La Salle and the Abbé, add anything to the story.

Tonty paid small heed to their silence; for in his mind was the one great thought that La Salle was alive and might reach the fort at any time. Four years before, his beloved leader had gone from the fort on the Illinois to Canada and across to France; and three years before, he had sailed from France for the mouth of the Mississippi. In all that time, alternating between hope and the gloomy despair which lately had so often fallen upon his soul, Tonty had waited hoping each day for news from his lost chief. Now it had come.

Little had Tonty liked the priestly elder brother of his friend; for in the days of the past the Abbé Cavelier, with his captious ways, his complainings and his intrigues, had been a source of much annoyance to La Salle. But let such things be forgotten now, for the man came bringing news — good news of the lost chief. And so within the walls of Fort St. Louis, in the far wilderness of this Indian country, Tonty listened as the Abbé and Joutel told the story he so long had waited to hear, the tale of the adventures of three anxious and exciting years.

XXVI

AN ILL-STARRED VOYAGE

On the 24th day of July, three long years before, these five weather-worn men and their comrades had seen the shores of France fade slowly from their sight. Out of the harbor of Rochelle had sailed that summer day twenty-four ships. Twenty of the number soon drew away from the rest and turned their bows toward the mouth of the St. Lawrence and New France; the other four sailed on alone.

On board the four ships were near three hundred souls, embarking on a voyage no one of them had made before. One of the boats, the Joly, a ship of war, carried thirty-odd pieces of cannon. But it carried also more precious cargo. Monsieur Beaujeu, a proud man and bold, was its captain; and with him, as leader of the colony that thus fared forth to the glory of the King of France, was Robert Cavelier, Sieur de La Salle. Restless and ambitious as ever, he now felt under his feet the roll of decks which the king had given him with godspeed to find the mouth of the Mississippi River and plant there a settlement that would be the beginning of a great new empire in the heart of the American wilderness.

The King of France had caught a glimpse of La Salle's vision of the future of the Great Valley. He had listened, too, while La Salle had whispered into his eager ears the story of how the hated Spaniards, clinging these many years to the rich lands of Mexico, would fall before the attacks of the French, aided by the hordes of Indians whom they would recruit from the colony about Fort St. Louis and from the lower Mississippi Valley.

In the four ships were a hundred soldiers; and since colonies have need of such, there were carpenters and tool-makers and bakers and stonemasons and engineers. There were also priests and friars — among others La Salle's brother, the Abbé Cavelier, and Father Anastasius Douay. On board one of the ships was the energetic figure of Father Membré, who was no stranger to the Great Valley of the Mississippi. He had entered it with La Salle, and later had hardly struggled out of it with his friend of the iron hand after the Iroquois raid. He had come back with the gallant party that paddled down the length of the valley to the sea, and had been the one to carry news of the voyage to Canada and to France. Still did he cling to the side of his leader, stanch friend that he was.

Born in the same town of Rouen with La Salle was a man named Henri Joutel. When a mere boy he joined the army, and after serving about sixteen years he had come back to his native town in time to join others who were shipping with their townsman for the trip across the sea. Last of all, these four ships held a handful of women and girls who were ready to try the perils of the sea and the fearsome dangers of a strange land.

Thus they had sailed, a company of colonists of all classes and descriptions—good men and bad, brave men and weak, workers and drones, gentlemen and stout-hearted peasants, debauched nobles and the riffraff of seaport towns; men who took their load and endured through hardship, sickness, and despair; and men whom Joutel declared were fit only to eat part of the provisions.

Never had the unconquerable spirit of La Salle met such stubborn blows as now. In the first place the arrangements of the voyage were well-nigh fatal to success, for the company had two heads, each one a man accustomed to command alone and impatient of any other authority. Beaujeu, an old naval officer who was the captain of the fleet, saw little of greatness in La Salle, and looked upon him as a dreamer if not a fanatic. La Salle, leader of the colony, with authority to determine the route to be taken, looked with distrust upon Beaujeu, held his own counsel about his plans, and regarded the captain as his enemy and the chief obstacle to the successful outcome of his mission. Before ever the ships set sail these two men had their quarrels, and on the open seas it was no better.

Years of bitter experiences, of wilderness hardships, of daily and nightly perils, of disappointments and losses, had hardened the temper of La Salle's will; and these years had not softened a certain coldness and harshness of manner that lost him many friends. Suspicion and doubt of his fellows deepened in his heart with every turn of his wheel of fortune. With all his remarkable power over the Indians, he constantly failed to understand and make himself loved by the men of his own race over whom he was in command. Naturally with his mongrel company of voyagers things went sadly wrong. No one appreciated better than Tonty, as he listened to the tale of the Abbé and Joutel, how adventures and trials such as the party were bound to meet would try each man and show him for a true man, a knave, or a weakling.

At the island of Santo Domingo the Joly made port and lay to, waiting for the balance of the fleet which had fallen behind. There were fifty sick in the company, among them La Salle. But there was much to be done on shore. While walking one day with Joutel in the streets of the little town of Petit Gouave, La Salle was overcome by a sudden weakness and sank to the ground. Joutel took him as soon as possible to a house which had been temporarily rented by the Duhaut brothers, two members of La Salle's company. Before he was himself again one of the Duhauts rashly told him that Spanish buccaneers had captured one of the four ships, and straightway his sickness returned. Joutel and the Abbé said little to Tonty of the elder of these Duhauts, but in their own minds they thought of him with a hate that had no basis in the tale they were telling.

For many weeks La Salle and his voyagers were delayed at Santo Domingo, gathering supplies for the rest of the voyage. More of the company fell ill; and some, fearful of coming dangers, deserted. At last they got away late in November and sailed west along the southern coast of Cuba. Soon they had passed the long island and turned the prows of their ships toward the shores of the Gulf of Mexico.

Two or three days before the end of the year 1684, they sighted land. Thinking that they were near the Bay of Appalache, they sailed westward, in cold wind and rain and fog, hoping each day to find the mouth of the Great River. Sometimes they landed men to explore a river mouth or lagoon. Once, on the 6th of January, they came to what appeared to be the mouth of a bay with an island in the midst of it, but La Salle, still convinced that the Mississippi was far to the west, pushed on along the coast. As January drew to a close they found the shore line trending more and more to the south, and even La Salle began to think they had gone beyond the river they were seeking.

At length they landed on the shore of a bay where a river ran down to the Gulf, and the perplexed leader of the wandering colony made up his mind that they had found the western mouth of the Mississippi. One of the ships, coming into the bay under the ill-management of the pilot, ran aground and broke apart. In despair La Salle put his men to saving the cargo. Under great difficulties provisions and ammunition were rescued from the fated ship and piled on the lonely shore. Through the long night that followed unfriendly Indians prowled about eager for plunder, and sentinels walked up and down upon the sand keeping watch among the precious boxes and barrels, while the miserable band of colonists tried to get sleep.

Discouraging as was this beginning, greater misfortunes were not slow in coming to the colony. La Salle's nephew, Moranget, hot-headed and unwise, visited an Indian village with some of the men to trade and to look for stolen property; and when they took leave they made off with Indian blankets and canoes. Upon their return they camped at night, their sentinel slept, and the Indians crept upon them. War-whoops rose in the air and into the group of sleeping white men by the smouldering fire came a volley of arrows, killing two of the company. Moranget finally succeeded in reaching the camp by the shore with the ill news upon his lips and an arrow in his shoulder.

No man knew better than La Salle the evil results that would surely follow such relations with the Indians; but there was no mending matters now. Ill luck blew in every wind; what with keeping constant watch upon prowling Indians, fighting prairie fires that threatened to reach the provisions and gunpowder, and burying along the sandy shore those of the company who fell sick and died, the colony of La Salle was making wretched progress.

Leaving a hundred and thirty of the company in charge of Joutel, La Salle with a handful of men went off to explore. He came back with his own stubborn mind convinced that he was not so near the Mississippi as he had supposed. Beyond a doubt he and all of his men were lost.

Beaujeu and a part of the company had already sailed away; they were returning to France to tell their friends that La Salle was landed on the shore of the Gulf amid hostile

Indians and with no certain knowledge of where he was. As a matter of fact La Salle had passed the mouth of the Mississippi by nearly four hundred miles and was camped on the shores of what is now Matagorda Bay in Texas.

XXVII

HUNTING THE MISSISSIPPI

Somewhere off to the east the Mississippi River was running down through the Great Valley to the sea; and La Salle's determination to find it deepened with his discouragements. But first they must make the location near the sea habitable as a supply station for further exploration. To that end a rude fort had been erected near where they had landed, and Joutel with part of the company had been left in charge while La Salle explored the neighborhood. Soon he came upon a site a little farther up the river which seemed more suitable for a permanent fort; and so he sent back word to Joutel to square timbers ready for the new building and join him later at this upper location.

In these widespread sandy plains of the Southland there was no high rock like that of Fort St. Louis on the Illinois. But there was a rising hill near the river, and here with his own hands La Salle laid the outline of the fort and directed its construction. The new fort took rapid shape; and La Salle, after his favorite saint, called it Fort St. Louis, and he named the inlet where they landed the Bay of St. Louis.

Out of squared timbers the men built a large dwelling and divided it into apartments. Around this they built a palisade, and set up the eight precious cannon. It was a pleasant location. The river bathed the foot of the hill on the north and northeast and ran on down to the bay. Across the river was a marshy tract where birds innumerable sang in their season. To the west and southwest, crossed and recrossed by herds of shaggy buffalo, the plains stretched as far as the eye could reach.

Here and there were little groups of trees, including many which remained green the whole year through. From a distance these bits of foliage gave to the lonely colonists the pleasing picture of the groves about country homes in far-away France. In their imaginings they seemed to see the country peopled by white settlers instead of the Indians who prowled about the new settlement and sometimes fell upon their wandering hunters.

The colony had grown steadily smaller:

during the summer more than thirty had died of sickness; some had been killed by the Indians; and a few had deserted. Among the sick was the Abbé Cavelier. La Salle, consumed with the desire to hunt for his lost river, only waited for his brother to recover sufficiently to go with him. By fall the priest was well, the fort was established, and La Salle made ready to go. But before he departed he called Joutel aside and gave him charge of the colony, with careful instructions not to receive any of the exploring party if they should come back unless they brought a letter from La Salle himself containing the password: "In the name of the very blessed Trinity." Then as October of 1685 drew to a close, La Salle, with his brother and a goodly number of men, amid the firing of cannon, set out along the bay with all of the canoes and the bark La Belle to seek what they might find to the eastward.

Joutel, who had been left with thirty-four persons, — men, women, and children, — kept them all busy. Some he sent out as hunters and others he put to carrying wood and completing their dwellings and storehouses. Now and then Indians were seen, but they did not come near the fort. For their better protection Joutel divided the night into watches and with great care posted sentinels — a duty which even the women shared. Weeks passed and the new year came upon them; and still La Salle had not returned.

One evening in the middle of January the men and women, in from their work, were gathered within the palisaded house on the hill, when suddenly the sentinel cried out to them that he heard a voice calling from the river. In great haste the men ran out of the house and down to the shore. Out on the water they could see the outlines of a canoe and in it one lone man, who called out at the twinkling lights of the settlement, "Dominick!"

Dominick was the younger of the Duhaut brothers; and as the voyager neared the shore the men from the fort saw that he was the elder Duhaut who had set out with La Salle nearly three months before. Now he was returning alone, and so Joutel questioned him closely. Had he a letter from La Salle? No. Joutel pondered. "Let no one come back to the fort unless he brings a letter from me with the password in it," La Salle had said in parting. Should he turn Duhaut away again into the wilderness, or should he throw him into irons until the return of the leader? It was a puzzling predicament which confronted Joutel; but at least he might listen to the man's story. When Duhaut had finally told of his adventures, the good-hearted Joutel saw nothing wrong in taking him in again as a member of the garrison.

La Salle, so said Duhaut, had coasted along the shore with canoes and the Belle for many days. Once he sent out a party of six to reconnoiter the land. They did not return, and later a search party found their dead bodies along the shore where Indians had massacred them. La Salle was discouraged but not completely disheartened. Gathering meat on shore and drying it for preservation, he loaded it with other provisions on board the Belle, and ordered a portion of his men to stay on the ship and remain out in the bay until his return. Then with twenty men he went ashore, sunk his canoes, and trailed inland — still hoping to come upon the Great River.

The elder Duhaut was one of this exploring party, as was also Moranget, who had orders from La Salle to bring up the rear. Now it so happened that Duhaut's knapsack and shoes were in bad condition and he stopped to mend them. Moranget, coming up, urged him to move on; and Duhaut in turn asked Moranget to wait for him. Moranget, however, would not stop, but passed on with the rest of the company. Finally when Duhaut looked up he found no one in sight. With hurried steps he followed in the direction his companions had taken. When night fell he was still alone in a plain full of weeds and buffalo tracks, but with no sign of men. He fired his gun, but nothing save the echo answered the report. At last he lay down under the open sky to sleep.

When morning came Duhaut rose with fresh hope and fired again several times; but there was no answer. He was lost. All that day and night he remained near the same spot, hoping that some of the party might return to find him. At length, when no one came, he determined to hunt his way back to Fort St. Louis. Leagues of wilderness lay between him and the fort, and he well knew that in every clump of trees might lurk hostile Indians.

Each day he lay in fear and suspense, hiding under logs and underbrush; and by night he stumbled on toward home. His provisions gave out and he must kill game for food — each time with difficulty and in great danger of discovery by the Indians. Weeks of this nightly wandering passed before he finally reached the place where La Salle had sunk the canoes. Laboriously he raised one of the boats from its watery bed, and in it paddled on down the bay. When the wind blew he hoisted his shirt for a sail. At last he reached the fort after he had been a month on the way, miraculously escaping death from Indian foes and suffering almost incredible hardships. Joutel could not find it in his heart to refuse to accept the man. He contented himself with watching him carefully for a few days, but saw nothing to arouse suspicion or displeasure.

A favorite post of Joutel's was the housetop, from which he could see in every direction. It was from this lookout, about two months after Duhaut's return, that he saw, far off across the plains, a little group of men. Hurrying down he gathered a few of his men, put them under arms, and advanced to see who the newcomers might be. They were La Salle, the Abbé, Moranget, and five or six others. Their clothes were ragged and worn beyond description. Scarcely a hat was there in the party or a whole garment, and the Abbé's cassock hung upon him in tatters.

La Salle had sent some of his men to find the Belle. On the day after La Salle's return, they, too, came to the fort and reported that they could not find the ship. Later it was learned that the bark had run aground and the crew had been forced to desert it. Thus the last one of the ships was gone and with it the hope of going to the West Indies for aid.

La Salle had traveled far, but he had found little to encourage him in his journeyings. Yet like a will-o'-the-wisp the desire to find the river would not let him rest. Hardly a month did he tarry at the fort. It was during this month that Tonty was at the mouth of the Mississippi hunting with heavy heart for his lost leader.

By the end of April, La Salle again ventured forth with a score of men, this time on foot. Again the Abbé and Moranget were of the party; and with them were Dominick Duhaut, a German buccaneer named Hiens, a surgeon, and a dozen others fitted by constitution for hardship and danger.

Once more Joutel was left in charge of the settlement which thrived under his hand. All about the house he planted grain and vegetables and melons. He repaired the buildings, and here and there trained climbing vines. Father Membré kept a vegetable garden of his own. Game being fairly plentiful, Gabriel Barbier was sent out as head of the hunting-parties, and some of the women and girls went along to help dress the game. At the fort there was target practice, and prizes were offered for marksmanship. Being somewhat limited in ammunition, Joutel instructed those who dressed the game on the hunt to search for the bullet; and often the same ball was used to bring down several animals.

Sometimes the hunters had encounters with the Indians and once several of the men were wounded; yet withal they were little molested. When in the house at night the company kept in good cheer with music and dancing. Thus the summer of 1686 passed comfortably enough.

Not until August did La Salle come back; and when he did come it was with only a fragment of his band. A part of his men had become separated from the rest and never returned — and the younger Duhaut was one of the lost. This time La Salle brought back with him five horses, and reported that he had traveled to the northeast as far as the villages of the Cenis Indians. But he had not found the Mississippi River.

The undaunted leader now made plans to gather a party which, with provisions and supplies loaded on the five horses he had bought, would make for Fort St. Louis, on the Illinois River, where Tonty and his men were waiting, and thence go on to Canada and France to bring aid and supplies to the colony on the Gulf. He asked Joutel to join the party, while Gabriel Barbier was put in charge of the fort and the men and women who remained there.

He was a man with a story — this Gabriel Barbier. About eight years before, while in the service of La Salle, he had been persuaded by other men to desert with them. La Salle went on out to the Illinois country, built Fort Crèvecœur, and in the spring of 1680 went back to Canada for supplies. That summer Barbier came to him begging to be taken back, and La

Salle consented. He had gone down the Great River with his leader in 1682 and had been a valuable member of the party; and now, after being further tried by the experiences of the expedition to the Gulf, he was placed by his leader in a position of trust and power.

XXVIII

FROM THE GULF TO THE ILLINOIS

THERE were seventeen men who set out on foot, early in January, 1687, to travel from Fort St. Louis on the Gulf of Mexico to the other Fort St. Louis on the Illinois River — a journey of over a thousand miles. They knew no trails which they could follow, nor were there bridges on which to cross the rivers; and to a large extent they must gather their food as they went. They must sleep where night found them; and they must trust the Indians whose country they were crossing to treat them as friends and give them guidance upon the way, for as far as they knew there was no white man in all the distance between the two forts. Yet forth they went bravely — La Salle and his brother and two nephews (Moranget and the young Cavelier), Joutel, and Father Douay, Duhaut the elder and his man L'Archevêque, whom he had picked up at the isle of Santo Domingo, Liotot the surgeon and Hiens the buccaneer, a young boy named Pierre Talon whom La Salle planned to leave at the Cenis village to learn their language, and a half-dozen others.

Father Membré, full of grief, remained with Barbier and the party at the fort and saw the slender band of explorers start off across the plains, their five horses loaded with supplies for a long and arduous journey. It being winter in the Southland, rains came upon them frequently and swamps and swollen streams blocked their way. Sometimes for days they walked drearily along the wet banks of rivers, looking for a place to ford. Occasionally they used logs to cross upon, but finally they found the streams so wide that they stopped and made portable boats out of buffalo hides.

There was no lack of game; and the broad paths of the buffalo often served as trails. Time and again the party came across Indians, with whom La Salle almost invariably made friends. Sometimes he visited their hunting-camps and smoked with them the pipe of peace. At other times he called them into his own camp to smoke and eat, and then sent them away happy with presents. They came upon Indian villages with round huts like French ovens, and stopped to trade beads and hatchets for a horse or provisions or deer-hide for fresh moccasins, listening meantime to the tales of Indian wars or of the Spaniards from whom their horses first came. They crossed the rivers now known as the Colorado and the Brazos and drew near to the Trinity River.

Many were the adventures which Joutel and the Abbé related to Tonty at Fort St. Louis on the Illinois. Before they reached the Cenis village, they said, La Salle separated from them, but intended to follow them soon. He was in good health when he left them. Without their leader they had pushed on to the village of the Cenis, and from there they went with guides to the Arkansas towns.

It was the 24th of July, 1687, three years to a day since they had sailed out of the harbor of Rochelle, when they came at last to a village on the shore of the Arkansas and saw on the river bank a house built like the houses of Frenchmen and the blessed cross rising straight to the sky. Out of the house on the shore came running two white men to welcome them. They were Jean Couture and De Launay, two of the men whom Tonty had left there on his return from his trip to the mouth of the Mississippi the year before. At the village the Arkansas danced the calumet dance before the Abbé. Later Couture accompanied the five men as far as the village of the Kappas, from which place, with Arkansas guides and an Indian canoe, they had come up the Mississippi and the Illinois and reached Fort St. Louis in the month of September.

Such in brief was the tale that the two men — brother and companion of La Salle — told to Tonty on the high rock of Fort St. Louis. The Man with the Iron Hand listened to each word with intense feeling. Nearly ten years before he had cast his lot with La Salle. With him and for him he had literally hungered and suffered and bled. He had given what he had of worldly goods, and his time, his strength, his whole self he had thrown into the balance to uphold the plans of his chief. He knew him as few men did — he knew his faults as well as his great abilities — and he loved him. Often he had remonstrated with him over some actions or methods that lost him favor with his men; but he also saw the breadth and power of his leader's vision.

Time and again he had thought his friend lost and dead — as he had been told so stoutly in the days long before when he lived almost alone in the Kaskaskia village. In despair he had hunted the Great River to its mouth — little dreaming, when he gave the letter into the hands of the Quinipissa chief, that La Salle was in the wilderness more than a hundred leagues to the west.

But now had come news that La Salle was alive and in good health and perhaps coming fast upon the heels of his men to the citadel on the high rock where Tonty and Boisrondet and other faithful comrades had waited and dreamed of his coming for four long years. Yes, he was on his way to the Illinois country whose Indians never forgot him, but loved him as one of their own great chiefs. He was coming back to the Kaskaskias whose home he had restored, to the Shawnees whom he had gathered at the foot of his great fort, to the Miamis whose chief he had raised from the dead in his own person. It was like the coming back from the dead to Tonty, too, after these years of despair. And so, in his joy, he paid little heed to the quiet friar in the gray robe or the mariner

Teissier, who moved so silently among the buildings of the fort.

The entire colony on the Illinois River — Indian villages and French garrison alike — buzzed with excitement that winter. Nothing was too good for the men of La Salle's party. Around the fires in the quarters of the French, men gathered to sing songs and tell stories of adventure and battle and strange countries, and to talk of him who was coming.

Especially among the Indian lodges was there great good cheer, for the white father was alive and on his way back to their villages and camp-fires. There was joy, too, among the tribes over the raids the Illinois were making. It seemed as though the Iroquois scourge was being driven out of the valley for good, as band after band of Illinois left the lodges to the women and old men and struck out upon the trail of the Iroquois. Scalps they brought home and captives, and many were the burnings by which they paid interest upon their debt of vengeance. With Tonty in New York they had laid waste the Iroquois fields, and now their good fortune still continued. So white men and red together were glad.

The five men who had come to the fort in September were anxious to get on with their journey, and Tonty promised them all the aid in his power as soon as the spring should make travel possible. But with all their hurry, there was one who seemed even more full of anxiety. The priest Allouez, who had recovered from his sickness, did not lose his apparent dread of the approach of La Salle. Spring, coming on apace, increased his scarcely concealed restlessness; and when in March the way became somewhat open, the black-robed Jesuit was the first to slip out of the fort and up the valley to his friends on the Lake.

Then the Abbé with his four companions made ready to go. But they must have means to buy food and transportation on their way to Canada and France. So the Abbé showed to Tonty a letter from La Salle, asking Tonty to furnish his brother, the Abbé, with money or furs. Tonty, with the greatest content, supplied them with what they needed for the journey, and late in March the five men of La Salle's party, with guides to accompany them, left the high rock on their long homeward journey.

After bidding the five men farewell, Tonty turned his attention to the fort which must be put in readiness for the coming of the master. Month after month passed and he hoped each day to see a canoe or canoes cutting the water of the Illinois far downstream. Summer went by and no La Salle. September came without bringing the leader. La Salle was now a year behind his advance party. But one day there did appear a canoe on the stream below the fort, and in it were a Frenchman and two Indians. Tonty full of excitement made haste to welcome them. It was not La Salle: it was Tonty's man Couture from the Arkansas post. But surely he came with news from La Salle; and so quick questions leaped at Couture almost before he was in sound of Tonty's voice.

XXIX

WHEN HE LEFT THEM

Couture did, indeed, bring news concerning La Salle. Within the palisaded walls that crowned the rock of Fort St. Louis, the Man with the Iron Hand now listened to a story that hardened his soul with anger and despair. The Abbé and Joutel had told him much, but they had not told him all. From what Couture said it became evident that when the Abbé and his party reached the post on the Arkansas, they had told some things which they did not afterwards relate at Fort St. Louis. Thus through Couture's account, pieced out by other details learned later, Tonty came to know the real heart of the story which the Abbé and Joutel had only told in half.

The thread of the hidden tale ran back to the beginning of the voyage from France. On the way across the sea there was a growing discontent among the men, which ripened into intrigue when they landed. While Joutel with part of the colony was guarding the supplies on the shore and squaring timbers to be used in the fort upstream, a confession by one of the men enabled him to foil a conspiracy to kill Le Gros, who guarded the storehouse, and himself steal arms and supplies from the storehouse and desert to the wilds. Joutel turned the men over to La Salle, but the incident did not make sufficient impression upon his own unsuspicious nature. When some months later Duhaut came back alone from La Salle's first expedition, Joutel contented himself with watching him narrowly for a few days. When La Salle set out on his second expedition, Duhaut remained behind with the men at the fort.

As the weeks of La Salle's absence lengthened into months, discontent spread among the members of the colony at the fort. Probably La Salle was lost; at all events, it did not look as if he were coming back. Little knots of men drew off together to talk of their wrongs. Why not desert La Salle and take matters into their own hands? Duhaut passed among the discontented with words of encouragement: under his management things would be different. Having staked considerable wealth in the enterprise of La Salle's colony, Duhaut had grumbled much at the ill fortune that had come upon them; but in spite of all the losses of the colony he had managed to keep a large supply of goods, — knives, hatchets, cloth for garments and for Indian trade, — and these and many other possessions he now promised to divide among those who would follow him.

Joutel, learning of the mutterings of the men and the intrigues of Duhaut, called the conspirator before him with sharp words. Later he felt that he would have done better service to La Salle if he had put Duhaut to death upon the spot. After talking with the men and quieting their discontent, he tried to prevent further trouble by keeping them busily at work about the fort. It was not long after this incident that La Salle came back from his search for the lost river.

The party which journeyed forth upon the final expedition in January of 1687 was not large, but it was one which held great possibilities for trouble. There were stanch friends of La Salle in the party — among them his hot-headed nephew Moranget. But Duhaut also was there with his devoted tool L'Archevêque and his friend Liotot the surgeon — a man who, like Duhaut, had money invested in the colonial venture and was sorely put out at the progress of affairs.

For more than two months the seventeen men traveled together across the prairies until, about the middle of March, they drew near to a place where La Salle on his former trip to the Cenis villages had hidden some supplies.

They halted and La Salle sent out a party of men to bring the food into camp. It was on the fifteenth of the month that this party of seven set out — Duhaut and L'Archevêque, Liotot and Hiens the buccaneer, Teissier, a servant of La Salle's named Saget, and Nika, a faithful Shawnee who had crossed the ocean twice with La Salle and served him with undying devotion. They did not have far to go; but they found the food spoiled and unfit for use.

On the way back the keen-eyed Shawnee saw two buffaloes, and, slipping along after them, killed them both. The men halted where they were and sent Saget back to camp to tell La Salle that if he would send horses they would bring the meat home. No one having returned by nightfall the six men slept upon the ground. The next day they cut up the buffaloes and placed the meat upon scaffolds to dry. Then, as was the custom of hunters, they laid aside the marrow bones and some other portions for their own use.

Saget returned from the camp with three men — Moranget, De Marle, and Meusnier — and with horses on which to pack the meat. Now Moranget, the nephew of La Salle, was not a favorite with the men to whom he came this day. When he had been ill for weeks on the shore of the bay from the arrow which rash adventure had lodged in his shoulder, Liotot the surgeon had cared for him with a patience which no man of the colony forgot; but when he was well again his surly temper vented itself upon even the doctor who had tended him. None the less did Duhaut dislike him, for he felt that his long month of hardship when lost in the wilds would not have come upon him if Moranget had been more patient in waiting for him.

No March wind was ever more blustering than this young man as he rode into the little camp and saw the meat drying on the scaffolds and the men guarding the marrow bones and other bits for themselves. In an unreasoning fury he seized, not only the drying meat, but the men's own portion. He would take care of the meat thereafter, he said, and not let them eat it up as they had in the past.

His words fell upon the hatred of these fierce men like a match tossed into gunpowder. The five drew apart and held council. Too long had they borne with this young upstart. Night fell, but the conspirators did not sleep. Liotot rose quietly, while Moranget, Nika, and Saget were fast asleep. Hatchet in hand the surgeon stole over beside them and with a single blow split open the head of the hated Moranget. Nika and Saget he treated in the same fashion.

Meanwhile the other conspirators crouched with guns in hand ready to shoot if any one made resistance. Moranget was the only one to stir. Half sitting up he gasped and tried to speak. Then the murderers, to implicate the innocent De Marle, who had accompanied Moranget, forced him upon pain of death to finish the killing of his friend.

Murder had lifted its horrid head at last in the voyage that had known almost every other disaster. Could it stop there? The men took counsel together. What would be their chance of life when the news reached their leader?

Their only safety now lay in going at once to the camp and killing both La Salle and Joutel. They started, but the river, swollen by a heavy rain, made them pause to construct a raft to transport their meat. While thus delayed they suddenly heard a gun fired as if in signal. Duhaut and his man L'Archevêque quickly crossed the river and a moment later they saw La Salle in the distance coming to seek them. Duhaut dropped quietly in the weeds to await his approach. La Salle, accompanied by the Recollet Douay, drew nearer, caught sight of L'Archevêque, and called out to him to know where Moranget was. Without removing his hat or otherwise saluting his astonished chief, L'Archevêque answered in an indifferent tone that he was along the river somewhere. La Salle started toward him with a rebuke. L'Archevêque answered with still more insolence. Then the crack of a gun came from the tall grass where Duhaut was hiding and La Salle, shot in the head, fell upon the ground. Without a word he died.

Douay, speechless, stood still in his tracks. The others came running up, Liotot in scornful exultation crying out over the body of La Salle:

"There thou liest! Great Bashaw! There thou liest!"

Hiens, rough man that he was, perhaps already felt remorse — for La Salle had been good to him. Teissier the mariner, who had neither joined in the plot nor tried to prevent it, looked on while the men stripped the fallen leader and dragged his dead body into the bushes.

There they left him, their leader, a prey to the birds of the air and the wolves of the plains, unburied in the far corner of the Great Valley of whose waters and prairies and people he would never dream again.

XXX

WHITE AND RED SAVAGES

At the main camp on that fatal 19th of March, LaSalle had left Joutel with four others — the Abbé, young Cavelier, Pierre Talon, and another young boy called Barthelémy. From time to time during the day Joutel had lighted fires on rising ground near the camp so that La Salle, if he lost his way, could return easily. He was alone on one of these little hills toward evening, looking down upon the horses grazing in the field near by, when some one came running up to him in great excitement. It was L'Archevêque, a man who had always been kindly disposed toward Joutel. There was very bad news to tell, he said, confused and almost beside himself.

"What is it?" asked Joutel in quick alarm.

"La Salle is dead," he replied, "and also Moranget, his nephew, and two others." He added that they had been murdered and that the assassins had sworn to come on and kill Joutel as well.

Joutel stood dazed, scarcely knowing what to say or do. Should he fly to the woods and trust to Providence to guide him to civilization? Having come away from camp without his gun, life was scarcely more secure in the wilds than in the camp with the murderers. But, added L'Archevêque, the conspirators had decided on the way home not to kill Joutel unless he offered resistance. After all, perhaps it was better to risk death in the company of white men than in the wilderness alone; and so the two men turned back to the camp.

There they found the Abbé Cavelier in a corner praying, and Father Douay still overwhelmed and not daring to speak to Joutel for fear of the murderers. The murderers had come wildly into camp and had seized the belongings of La Salle. Duhaut had assumed the place of leader.

"You may kill me if you wish," said the Abbé, "but give me a half-hour to prepare for the end."

But the white savages had had enough of killing. If all would yield to the new leaders they might keep their lives. There was nothing else to do. Those who were not in the plot stood guard that night; and in the long hours Joutel and the Abbé, young Cavelier and Douay, made a solemn agreement to stand by each other until death — which now seemed very near to them.

The next morning, under Duhaut's direction, the forlorn band of thirteen packed up their camp supplies and continued their journey toward the Cenis village. A common tie — the need of escape from the wilderness — held them together. Yet even that tie was honeycombed with fears and hates and distrusts. Joutel, his soul rising in rebellion, wanted to kill the murderers in their sleep, but the Abbé dissuaded him.

With the guidance of Indians they soon crossed the Trinity River, and as they drew near to the town of the Cenis, four of the number — Joutel, Liotot, Hiens, and Teissier — were sent in advance to buy food. They camped at night outside the village; and the next morning they were met and escorted into the town by chiefs and elders dressed in great pomp with painted goatskins over their shoulders, crowns of feathers on their heads, and streaks of black and red paint on their faces.

The Cenis lived in round huts, shaped like old-fashioned beehives and made of a circle of poles bent over and lashed together at the top. The poles were interlaced with willow rods, and covered over with a thick thatch of grass. In the middle of the floor the Indians built their lodge-fire, which the several families living in the hut used in common.

Joutel's three companions soon left him to trade with the villagers while they went back to camp. Alone in the village of people whom his experiences on the shores of the Gulf had taught him to fear, Joutel drove his little bargains and listened and nodded his head to the chiefs as they told him of the war they were getting ready to make upon their enemies.

Fearful lest they should steal his merchandise, Joutel did not sleep well one night. He was tossing upon his robes about one o'clock when he heard some one move near him. Looking up, he saw, by the light of the fire in the center of the lodge, a man who was naked except for the tattoo marks upon his body. This stranger came and sat down by him, without saying a word. In his hands were a bow and two arrows. Joutel watched him a moment, then spoke. The man did not answer. Joutel reached for his pistol; whereupon the man rose, walked over to the fire, and again sat down.

Utterly puzzled, Joutel rose from his bed and followed the man, studying him intently all the while. The man returned his gaze, then threw his arms about Joutel, embraced him, and spoke to him with French words. He was Ruter, one of La Salle's sailors who had deserted him, two years before, for the woods and the wild life of the Indian camps. Another deserter, Grollet, had been afraid to come with him to the grass house where Joutel slept, for fear of La Salle.

For two years these white men had lived like the red men, they had married Indian women, and they had fought in the Indian wars. There was little now to distinguish Ruter from his dusky companions — except that long-buried yearning for his own people which made him come to Joutel and listen eagerly to his tale of adventures. The story of La Salle's death seemed to affect him deeply, and for a long time in the passing night the two men talked beside the fire in the Indian lodge. Later, Grollet also came to see and talk to Joutel.

For several days Joutel stayed in the village. Then messengers came from the camp to say that the leaders had decided to return to the fort on the Bay of St. Louis and there build a ship and sail for the West Indies. With what provisions he had secured, Joutel went back to the camp of the murderers, where he and the Abbé took counsel together. It was intolerable to continue life in the same camp with those who had killed La Salle, and so they made up their minds to leave their murderous companions and go on with those who had not been in the plot, toward the Mississippi River. They told Duhaut they were too fatigued to make the trip back to the Gulf and would remain with the Cenis,to which Duhaut finally agreed.

Hiens and several others, who had been sent to the village for horses on which to carry supplies back to the fort, had not yet returned. While they were waiting, one of the French deserters, who knew of the true plans of the Abbé and Joutel, told them to Duhaut and added that he believed the Mississippi to be not far off to the northeast; whereupon Duhaut changed his plan and decided that he too would go to the Mississippi.

News of Duhaut's decision soon reached Hiens at the Cenis village, and in a few days he came back to the camp, accompanied by Ruter and others. Hiens walked directly to Duhaut and declared that it was not safe to go to the Mississippi and on to the white settlements. As for himself, he would not go, and he demanded his share of the goods. When Duhaut refused, Hiens raised his gun and fired, saying, "You wretch! You murdered my master!" Duhaut fell dead. Almost at the same instant Ruter, the half-savage deserter, opened fire upon Liotot and mortally wounded him. Thus did the murderers of La Salle and Moranget come to their end.

Hiens was now in command of the party, which had decreased to eleven. The old buccaneer had promised the Cenis to go to their wars with them and, with Ruter and Grollet and three or four other Frenchmen, started out with the exultant Indian warriors, leaving the Abbé and his party in the village with the women and old men. Late in May the warriors returned, flushed with a great victory which the guns of the white allies had enabled them to win.

The Abbé and Joutel and their little group now asked leave to separate and try to make their way across to the Mississippi. Hiens gave his consent with much reluctance. As for himself he did not care to risk his life going back to civilized people; and the wild savage life in the Indian villages held him with a strong fascination. He divided supplies and merchandise with those who were leaving, gave them six horses to carry their goods, and with much advice set them on their way. Thus they took their departure — a band of seven — to make the last long march toward the settlements of white men. Hiens and L'Archevêque, Meusnier, and Pierre Talon cast in their lot with the Indians.

Innumerable were the adventures of the seven travelers. Town after town they passed, stopping often to smoke the pipe of peace, trade merchandise, and gather news of the way. One morning De Marle, while bathing in the river near an Indian village, was drowned before the Indians could rescue him. The six moved on, Indian guides leading them, until at last with a great feeling of joy they came to the establishment of Couture on the Arkansas.

Couture was the last man in America to whom they related the story of La Salle's death. The Abbé decided to keep it a secret from both the Indians and from Tonty, and not even to tell it in Canada, but to take the news across the seas with them to the court of France. Dreading that young Barthelémy would disclose their secret, they left him with Couture. The young boy told many things to the men at the Arkansas post. And now Couture was pouring out the whole tale to the commander of Fort St. Louis on the Illinois.

XXXI

TONTY'S HEROIC VENTURE

COUTURE had added the fatal sequel to the story of the Abbé and Joutel. Tonty heard it with mingled despair and rage. He thought of La Salle lying dead and unburied among the weeds beside a river hundreds of leagues in the wilderness; and he thought of the five men who had come to his fort and withheld the truth from him, the trusted lieutenant of their master. So La Salle was in good health when he parted from them on the other side of the Cenis villages! He remembered now the strange silence of Father Douay. The friar could not say that La Salle was well when he left him.

But the anger of Tonty rose most strongly against that priestly brother — the Abbé who had prevented Joutel from taking vengeance upon the murderers, who had accepted Tonty's hospitality all through the winter while deceiving him, and who had run off with his secret to France after begging supplies under a letter from his dead brother.

But what of the little garrison on the shore of the Gulf, the forlorn fragment of the colony under Gabriel Barbier at the other Fort St. Louis? Tonty thought of Father Membré and of the hardships they had gone through together. Was it too late to save them? A year had gone by since the Abbé and his party had reached the fort on the Illinois. It was almost two years since they had left Barbier; yet the colony might still be alive. The master was gone and there was no one left to save them but himself.

Perhaps in making ready to lead a rescue party to the fort on the Gulf, Tonty forgot some of his anger at the Abbé. Moreover, the Indian tribes between the Illinois and the sea had given the Abbé assurances that they would rally to an attack upon the Spaniards of the Southwest. Possibly he could do more than save the colony: it might be that he could fulfill the long cherished hope of La Salle by gathering a force of French and Indians and invading the territory of the hated Spaniards.

Twice Tonty had gone to the Gulf — once with La Salle and once in search of him. Now all that remained for him to do was to rescue the survivors whom La Salle's death had left almost without hope. He sent Couture back on the trail by which the Abbé and his party had come, to get what information he could; but Couture's canoe was wrecked a hundred leagues from the fort and he returned without news.

Then Tonty bought an Indian dugout and taking with him four or five Frenchmen, a Shawnee, and two Indian slaves, was on his way early in December. On the 17th, a village of Illinois Indians at the mouth of the river saw him go by; and a month later, near the mouth of the Arkansas, the Kappa tribe welcomed him with great joy and danced the calumet before him. He could not stop long at the Arkansas towns, but pushed on down the river to the country of the Taensas and the Natchez.

With a band of Taensas he left the Mississippi and struck off toward the west. After traveling some days across country they came upon the village of the Nachitoches, where they distributed presents and concluded peace with the Indians. Taking guides at this point they went up the Red River till they reached the village of the Cadadoquis, which lay upon the route by which the Abbé and Joutel and their companions had struggled out of the wilderness. Here the Indians told Tonty that Hiens and his party were farther on at a village known as Nabedache. These Nabedaches were the same Indians whom Joutel and the Abbé called the Cenis. At last Tonty was nearing the object of his expedition; a few more days and he would join the fragment of the party of La Salle and push on to the Gulf.

But what was this murmuring? The Frenchmen flatly refused to go farther; only one of them would stay with their leader. Tonty would push on nevertheless. With his one white man, the Shawnee, the two slaves, and five Cadadoquis as guides, he took up his march again early in April. The Frenchman strayed from the party and it was two long days before he found them again. Meanwhile, in crossing a river he had lost most of their powder — a serious misfortune.

Before the end of the month Tonty and his party reached the Nabedache village where two years before the Abbé and his companions had left Hiens and his crew among the Indians. The Indians told various stories of the Frenchmen for whom Tonty was searching. Some said that Hiens and his party had gone off with their chiefs to fight the Spaniards; while others told him that three had been killed by another tribe and the rest had gone away in search of arrowheads. Tonty himself came to the firm conclusion that the Cenis had killed the survivors.

He was now many leagues beyond the Red River and within a few days' journey of the scene of La Salle's murder. Eighty leagues more would take him to the fort on the Bay of St. Louis. Tonty begged for guides, but the Cenis would give him none. Hiens and his men were not to be found. He looked at his remaining supply of gunpowder, so necessary for providing food as well as defense. It was almost gone. Even Tonty could go no farther. With heavy heart he gave the Indians some hatchets and glass beads in exchange for Spanish horses and turned back toward the Mississippi.

It was the 10th of May when they reached the Cadadoquis village on the Red River, and here they stopped for a week to rest their horses. Then with an Indian guide they started once more for the Coroa village. In all the ten years Tonty had spent in the wilds he never had suffered such hardships — not even during his bitter experiences in the winter of 1680, when with Father Membré and his young French companions he had struggled out of the clutches of the Iroquois in the valley of the Illinois and fought his way against cold and starvation to the friendly Pottawattomie village on Green Bay.

While leading one of the horses by the bridle across a swamp the guide imagined himself pursued by an alligator and tried to climb a tree. In his haste he entangled the bridle of Tonty's horse, which was drowned. Fearful of punishment the guide made off to his people, leaving the party to find their way alone.

With Tonty in the lead they crossed, by one means or another, eight or ten swollen streams. Everywhere the country seemed drowned, for the spring freshets were on. They gave up their horses and carried their own baggage, wading day after day in water often up to their knees. They had to sleep and light their fires and cook their food on the trunks of fallen trees placed together. Only once did they find anything like dry land in the endless leagues of flooded country.

Their food gave out and they ate their dogs. There was nothing left and no wild animals were to be found in all the wet dreariness. One, two, three days passed with nothing to eat — only the water everywhere. On the evening of the third day, the 14th of July, they came at length to the Coroa village, where the chiefs feasted them for as many days as they had fasted. Here they found two of the men who had deserted; and toward the end of the month they all went on together to the towns at the mouth of the Arkansas River. The months of hardship had sapped even Tonty's endurance, and now for nearly two weeks he lay sick with a fever among these kindly Indians.

It was late in September, 1689, when Tonty finally reached the towering rock at Fort St. Louis and climbed to its friendly summit to rest. In the weary ten months' expedition he had neither found the bones of his friend, nor reached his fort on the Gulf, nor led an invading force into the land of the Spaniard. But he had done all that lay in his power to rescue his leader's last garrison.

The Abbé had left his own brother unburied in the wilds, had deliberately for more than a year delayed any effort to rescue the survivors at the fort, and had gone off to France on funds obtained by fraud and deceit. But Tonty, almost alone, had braved every peril and hardship for nearly a year in a last courageous but unsuccessful effort to save the pitiful remnant of his friend's ill-fated colony on the Bay of St. Louis.

XXXII

THE PITIFUL REMNANT

It was perhaps as well that Tonty was compelled to turn back, for he could have done little good even if he had been able to press on and reach the Bay of St. Louis. When he was at the Cenis or Nabedache village pleading for guides, the Spaniards had already marched from Mexico to attack the French fort and its little garrison, and were encamped on the hill where La Salle had left Barbier in charge of the survivors. But others had preceded them, and they found the buildings in ruins. Scattered here and there were boxes and bits of supplies; doors were unhinged, barrels broken open, and in the near-by meadow were dead bodies of Frenchmen.

On May 1, into the camp of the Spaniards walked two men. Painted and savage and dressed in buffalo hides, these two strangers were L'Archevêque and Grollet, the servant of Duhaut, and Ruter's half-savage companion. They had come to give themselves up to the Spaniards rather than endure longer their wretched existence among the Indians.

Three months before, so they told the Spanish officer, the meager garrison under Barbier, just recovering from a siege of smallpox, was set upon by howling Karankawan Indians who massacred the inhabitants and pillaged the fort. Gabriel Barbier and Father Membré both were killed outright. Barbier's wife with a three-months-old babe at her breast was saved for a time by the Indian women; but the warriors, returning and finding her still alive, murdered her also, and, seizing the baby by the feet, beat its brains out against a tree.

Thus the colony had paid for the offense of Moranget and his men when they had first landed on the red men's shores and robbed the native camp of canoes and blankets. After the massacre, L'Archevêque and Grollet claimed that they had come to the fort and buried fourteen of the dead.

Many years later there came to the ears of Tonty a remarkable tale of some who had escaped the killing at the fort on the Bay. Among those who had remained with Barbier was the widow Talon, whose husband had been lost on one of La Salle's first expeditions to hunt the river. One of her daughters had died of sickness at the fort. Her oldest boy Pierre had been taken by La Salle to the village of the Cenis to learn their language. Though she did not know it on the day of the massacre, Pierre had for a year and a half been running wild like the Indians themselves, in the Cenis country. A chief of the Cenis had taken him, together with young Meusnier, under his own protection.

But the widow still kept four of the children with her in the fort. Then came that awful day when the Indians fell upon them. Before the eyes of her children the widow was killed. But the Indian women took compassion upon the four little ones, carried them off on their backs, and adopted them into their own families. The oldest was a young girl named Mary Magdalene Talon, and her younger brothers were Jean Baptiste, Robert, and Lucien — one of whom, now a boy of four, had been born on the way over from France. With these four the squaws had rescued a young boy called Eustache Bréman.

In the lodges of Indians the five children were brought up by their foster mothers with as much care as the dusky children of the tribe. For many years the girl and her young brothers lived as the Indians lived. They ate meat as their red brothers did—raw, sun-baked, or half-cooked. The boys learned to run and to ride and to draw the bow; and like the Indians themselves they learned to run to the nearest stream each morning at break of day and plunge naked into the water, whatever the season might be.

One day the Karankawas took sharp thorns and pricked holes through the skin of the arms and faces and other parts of the bodies of these French children. Then, having burned in the fire a walnut branch, they crushed the charcoal into powder, mixed it with a little water, and forced it into the holes in their fair skin. It was very painful at first, but the pain soon passed away and then each adopted child appeared tattooed with marks that no washing could take out.

Jean Baptiste and young Bréman were soon old enough to be off with the braves. Perhaps the only habit of life which they could not learn was the eating of human flesh. Once the warriors fell upon a tribe of the Tonkawans and killed many, and for three days Jean Baptiste went without food because his foster people gave him nothing to eat save the flesh of the men they had slain.

Meanwhile among the Cenis or Nabedaches, Hiens and his party had been having strange experiences — fighting in the savage wars and living in the round thatched huts of the Indians. But it was not in the nature of things for this band of survivors to live peaceably among themselves. Ruter, the half-savage deserter who had talked one night with Joutel by the Cenis lodge-fire, quarreled with Hiens (so came the tale to Tonty) and killed the old buccaneer. As for Ruter, never more was he heard from. His companion, Grollet, and the miserable L'Archevêque, tiring of their life among the Indians, had already given themselves up to the Spaniards.

There remained, under the protection of the Cenis chief, Pierre Talon and his comrade Meusnier. One day an Indian friend came to them with warning on his lips: the Spaniards, cruel enemies of their countrymen, were marching into the Indian country looking for these refugee white men. In fear they fled from town to town; but their flight was in vain, for it was not long before they had fallen into the hands of the Spanish horsemen. Their captors marched them back to the village of the Cenis, hoping to find more whites there. They were disappointed, but during their brief stop they became so impressed with the Indians that they left three Spanish Franciscan friars and built them a chapel in the village. Two of the Spanish officers spoke the French language as well as their own; Talon and Meusnier had become familiar with the tongue of the Cenis; and so by means of a four-sided conversation the friars learned from the Indians a few words of their language before their men took the captives away to the southwest.

Pierre was greatly astonished at all this. These men seemed to be Christians even if they were Spanish, and instead of cruelty they had bestowed upon him only kindness. If the Spaniards were like this, he would have them capture also his sister and younger brothers. And so he told the Spaniards that he had three brothers and a sister living with the Karankawas, down near the Bay of St. Louis.

On the way back to Mexico the Spanish troops with swords and guns and horses rode into the village where the Talon children were. Jean Baptiste Talon and Eustache Bréman they did not find; but Mary Magdalene and Robert and Lucien were there. The officers agreed to give the Indians who had fostered them a horse for each child. But when they came to the girl Mary, who was older and larger, the Indians protested; for they thought that they ought to get two horses for her. The dispute grew hot and both sides sprang to arms. The Spanish guns spoke, two or three Indians fell dead and the others fled terrified. The subdued Indians finally gave up the girl for one horse, and the Spaniards rode out of the village, after giving the Indians some tobacco to ease the hearts of those whose dead lay upon the ground.

The foster mothers mourned over their lost children, especially the younger ones, for in the years of their stay with the tribe they had found warm places in Indian hearts. Jean Baptiste and young Bréman remained for another year with their Indian people. Then there came another Spanish troop and carried them off. Again the Indians wept and urged young Talon to escape as soon as possible and come back to them and bring with him as many Spanish horses as he could. He promised, but they never saw him again. Thus the Talons came to Mexico.

Pierre and Jean Talon, after many years with the Spaniards, came at last to their own country of France. Long before them the Abbé, Joutel, and their three companions had also come home to the land of the lilies.

In the wild reaches of the Great Valley there remained little trace of the last expedition of La Salle to found a colony at the foot of what Joutel had come to call the fatal river. Up and down the broad highway that ran through the valley from north to south, red men pushed their wooden dugouts or bark canoes. With moccasined feet they trailed the deer through the woods and followed the track of the shaggy beasts of the plains. And at break of day beside the enemy's camp they sent up the cry of war quite as they and their fathers had done for many hundred years. From one end of the valley to the other the white men had traveled; and yet, as the track of a canoe dies out of the water or the shadow of a flying bird passes over the plain and is gone, so now it seemed that the trail of the white men's passing had vanished out of the valley and that the dream that had led to their coming had been lost with the dreamer beneath the waving grass of the Southern plains.

Yet down by the Gulf a Quinipissa chief guarded year by year a precious letter, waiting, and not in vain, to give it to a white man who should come into the mouth of the river from the sea. And, far in the north, on a high rock beside the river Illinois, the Man with the Iron Hand, known and loved and feared by all the tribes, kept alive year after year the vision of his chief. His days were to be long in the valley he loved and his services many to his king and his Indian friends; and the time was yet to come when he would see the flag of France waving over a colony of Frenchmen at the mouth of the river which had run like a silver thread through a quarter of a century of dreams and deeds.

THE END

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA LIBRARY
BERKELEY

Return to desk from which borrowed.
This book is DUE on the last date stamped below.

23May'50
21Dec'51KU
26Dec'51LU
8Nov'57HM
REC'D LD
NOV 8 1957
26Nov'57JN
REC'D LD
NOV 26 1957
4Jan'58JZ
LIANG

FEB 4 1958
REC'D LD
JAN 15 1958
15Oct'58MHD
REC'D LD
OCT 15 1958
10Nov'58PTB
REC'D LD
NOV 3 1958

10Dec'58
Pick and mailing
JAN 10 1959
REC'D LD
DEC 19 1958
15Nov'60BS
REC'D LD
NOV 11 1960

LD 21-100m-11,'49 (B7146s16) 476

YB 44949